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The Spiritual Interpretation of the Scriptures

MATTHEW'S GOSPEL

BY

JOHN WORCESTER

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To be of use, this sketch of Matthew's Gospel must be read in close connection with the Bible words.

The chapters on the Genealogies have their value as connecting the New Testament with the Old, and indicating the lines of interpretation of the Old Testament as the Word which was made flesh.

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THE SPIRITUAL INTERPRETATION OF THE SCRIPTURES.

THE GENEALOGY IN MATTHEW.

CHAPTER I.

THE genealogy of the Lord Jesus is called in Matthew, "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham." Evidently this means that in Jesus is fulfilled the promise to David, "thy seed will I establish for ever," and the promise to Abraham, "in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." In other words, the line of representatives of the Lord, or of the Divine which was to be made flesh and dwell with men, leads to and is fulfilled in the Lord Jesus, who is the son and the heir of David and of Abraham. This is the common interpre-

tation of intelligent commentators, and does not require any confirmation.

Still, it is worthy of notice that the narrative by Matthew, whose other name was Levi, places special emphasis upon the events of the Lord's life as fulfilling the Scriptures — frequently using such expressions as, "Now all this is come to pass that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet," or, "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet." Also it is Matthew who so perfectly preserves the transformation of the Jewish law into the Christian law, in the Sermon on the Mount.

It might therefore be expected that a genealogy of the Lord by Matthew would give us the steps by which the Lord became the Word and the fulfilment of it; or, in other words, would be the genealogy of the Lord as the Son of Man.

An examination of the genealogy itself confirms this view. It begins with Abraham. And we are taught in the New Church that Abraham

in his simple pastoral life, his call to leave the land of his nativity, and his sojourn under the Divine protection and guidance in the land of Canaan, represents the child's first state of instruction, in which he is taught of God and heaven, and of the possibilities of the life of heaven, different from the natural life. As applied to the Lord, he represents the Lord's state in early boyhood, when His love of knowing was awakened, and He was taught of the Father the possibilities of His redeeming and saving work for men. And this was the beginning of the acquisition of the Word, from which the Lord was called the Son of Man.

Abraham himself represents the affection for being taught of Divine things, and the sense of their holiness, which so touches the heart of a little child when the Bible is reverently read to him; and which is a consequence of the openness of childhood's innocence to the Lord and heaven, and its sensitiveness to the presence of these in the Scriptures. In the Lord it was the Divine

Itself in the Word, received in its Divine holiness in the child's inmost consciousness. Isaac then represents the child's intelligence concerning Divine and heavenly things; which intelligence is so full and clear that there is nothing of the Lord and heaven which can be explained to manhood's most highly trained reason, which cannot also be presented as to its essential elements to the mind of a child, and seen in clear light. Therefore little children are in the province of the eyes in the heavens, and they first receive in simplicity the truths of life in which the Lord would instruct the heavens.

If this simple intelligence of childhood in regard to the living relations between God and man, is represented by Isaac, the formulation of varied knowledge from the Word in regard to the nature of heaven, and of the life of heaven upon the earth, is meant by Jacob and his twelve sons. The further development of the memory of knowledge is meant by their sojourn in Egypt. And then the difficult training of the boy or girl to

habits of good order, in obedience to these truths of good life — now in the form of personal commands — is meant by the discipline of the wilderness, and the life in Canaan under the Judges.

Thus the fourteen generations from Abraham to David represent the complete instruction of childhood in the truths of the Word, and the training to obey them.

David and the generations from him, represent the developments of youth which follow those of childhood. For David and the seed of David represent the Divine truth ruling in the church or in the mind.* But it is the truth not now received obediently as in childhood, but rationally; and applied to the arranging of all things of the mind in their true relations and order, the combating and expelling heterogeneous things, and harmonizing the homogeneous. This was represented by the consolidation of the kingdom in David's hands, and the subjugation of the nations around. The constant warfare of David repre-

* Apocalypse Explained, 444.

sents the labor in temptations by which this was accomplished in the Lord; and the peacefulness of the reign of Solomon represents the restful enjoyment of good when the conflicts were over.

But king Solomon became a worshipper of many gods; and after his days the kingdom was divided, and the northern and southern portions, under separate lines of kings — mostly evil, but partly good — entered upon a career which ended in their respective captivities in Assyria and Babylon.

The meaning of this is illustrated by the application of the story to the church which the Lord established. In this application, the temple which Solomon built represents the church which received the Lord truly; but his many wives and their idolatries represent the many religions which received something of Christian life from the Lord, together with much that was perverse and false.* And then the division of the kingdom, and the separate development of the northern

* Divine Providence, 245.

kingdom of Israel, represents the separation of the thought of the church from the life, and the elevation of standards of doctrine as the essentials of the church. This change took place within the first four centuries of the existence of the Christian Church; and then what was left of the life of the church was merely the natural benevolences, defiled by the claim of Divine authority by the priesthood, and by the worship of popes and saints and relics.

The captivity in Assyria represented the vastation of spiritual truth by doctrinal reasoning from self-intelligence, till there was no spiritual truth, no living knowledge of the Lord and heaven, left in the church. The captivity in Babylon meant the vastation of the good of the church till there was no spiritual good, no sense of inward life from the Lord, left in the church; but only natural good and external worship.

At first glance it seems impossible that there should have been any such development as this in the Lord's life, or any application of this part of

the story to Him. And yet there was in Him a change from the openness of infancy to the relative obscurity of later boyhood. And if the development that we are now considering, is in any sense a natural development of the human mind, it is evident that it must have affected Him as well as the church. That it was of this nature will be evident from a little attention to the quality of the Christian Church as first founded by the Lord.

And first we observe that it came at the time of the first development of the natural rationality of the race, as exemplified in the Greek people. No spiritual rationality, which would see the relation of correspondence between spiritual and natural, which would see clearly the relation between the Divine and the Human in the Lord, and understand the spiritual sense of the Word, was then possible. The Christian experience of the reception of good life from the Lord was received in a simple childlike way. But as soon as the explanation of it came in question, it was the

natural reason that took the matter up, and lost the life itself in discussion of its nature.

The best development of the Christian Church was among the Asiatics who first received it in a simple, childlike way.* But its largest development was among Europeans, whose Aryan stock is that of the rationality of the race — in its latest branch, the Teutonic of northern Europe, if we may judge from him who was the Apostle of the New Church, giving promise of a development of spiritual rationality at some future time.

In the meanwhile this natural reason is very full of self-conceit and of the service of self; and it was inevitable that the treasures of Christianity committed to its keeping should have suffered, both from its incapacity to understand them, and from the natural self to which this natural reason seems to belong.

Now, if this is according to the order of human nature, if the Christian experience does naturally first come in the days of youth, when the natural

* Spiritual Diary, 4676.

reason is active, and the first experience rouses both the natural reason to explain it, and something of selfish exultation in the possession of what is so Divinely precious, must there not have been some corresponding development in the Lord? In His early youth must He not have exulted both in His splendid intelligence and in the Divine saving power, the power to heal and to protect? Must He not have proved through hard experience how the self in His human tended to destroy the spiritual truth and love, from the Divine, in an Assyrian and Babylonian captivity? and then have set Himself to build anew the Divine kingdom in Himself on a surer basis?

This building anew for the fuller, truer reception of the Divine, is perhaps a longer process than we have supposed. We have thought that it was only necessary for the light to come into the world which would give men rational freedom, and the kingdom of the Lord would be established at once. But our story says that from the carrying away into Babylon unto the Christ was

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another fourteen generations: and we must hold clearly before our eyes the beautiful possibilities of the Divine Presence, in a holy city with streets of gold, through which runs the river of water of life, with the tree of life growing in every street by the banks of the river, and with abundant light from the glory of God and the Lamb, to help us realize how very far away is the attainment of the ideal. We read that during the captivity, "Evil-merodach, king of Babylon, lifted up the head of Jehoiachin, king of Judah, and brought him forth out of prison, and spake kindly unto him," which Swedenborg interprets as "the beginning of the establishment of the church."* We are taught that Cyrus, the conqueror of Babylon, who gave the Jews their freedom to return, represents "the Lord as to His Divine Human,"† Who judged the Babylon in the spiritual world, and gave a new freedom to men on earth. In the exercise of their new freedom under Cyrus, the Jews began to re-

* Internal Sense of Prophets and Psalms, JEREMIAH lii. 31.

† *Ibid.*, ISAIAH xlv. 1.

build their temple on the ruins of its former self; which means the rebuilding of the church "with those who become wise from the Word."*

The freedom to do this was to be from the presence of the Divine Human of the Lord, whereby the Babylon had already been judged; but many generations would pass before the Christ would be born, and the Lord would really come to His temple.† In the meantime we are told that "the new church to be established by the Lord . . . will live a long while without the truths and goods of the church, but that when the Lord comes they will become a church from Him, and will acknowledge Him:" ‡ which is meant by the children of Israel abiding "many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim," and afterward returning and seeking the Lord their God and David their king.

* Internal Sense of the Prophets and Psalms, HAGGAI i. 12–15.
† *Ibid.*, HAGGAI ii. ‡ *Ibid.*, HOSEA iii.

The length of time before the church can be prepared to receive the Lord in fulness, is likewise indicated in Swedenborg's explanation of the seven kings of Babylon, of whom "five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come." The seven kings, he says, are the truths of the Word which have been destroyed in the Church of Rome, "except this one, that all power in heaven and in earth was given to the Lord; and except another which has not yet come into question — and when it does it will not remain — which is, that the Lord's Human is Divine." And he adds "that this will yet come in question, may be evident from the fact that it is here foretold in the Apocalypse."* Nor has it yet come openly in question; and until it does, the rule of the love of self in that great body of the church will not come to its downfall.

Our present interest in this long period of preparation of the church for the Lord, lies in the fact that this is meant by the fourteen generations

* Apocalypse Revealed, 738.

from the carrying away into Babylon unto the Christ; for it will be remembered that it was the same Jehoiachin who was carried away from Jerusalem, to whom the king of Babylon afterward spoke kindly; and the second in the line from him was the Zerubbabel who was rebuilding the temple. The process which requires so long a period is a complex one, involving the humbling of the natural reason, and the development and training of the spiritual reason. First the exultation of the natural reason in the possession of Divine realities is to be wholly subdued, and the lesson thoroughly learned that not anything which is of self, or which appears to be of self, has saving power, but only the Lord alone. This is the lesson of the captivity which was so earnestly insisted upon by Jeremiah.* And then the spiritual reason is slowly developed, which is capable of discerning the Divine nature of the Lord, and of His work for men, of distinguishing clearly between what has been from Him in the history of

* Internal Sense of Prophets and Psalms, Jeremiah xxxviii., xlii.

the church, and what from men, and which returns to the teaching of the Gospels and of the Apostolic Age, with earnest desire to rebuild the church as the Lord built it — which is meant by the toilsome rebuilding of the house, and the re-establishment of worship therein.*

And presently this same reason, which thus discerns between what is of God and what is of men, can be instructed in the spiritual sense of the Bible, and understand the glorification of the Lord's Human, and be prepared to follow Him where at the first the apostles could not follow.

Through all this development the Lord passed in becoming the Word made flesh, for it is of this that the Word treats. And thus also He became the Son of Man, and, in the subjection of these human powers to the love of God, the Son of Man glorified.

* Possibly the sense of the lack of conjunction with the Lord during this period is meant by the absence of the ark from the rebuilded temple; and the continued struggle to prevent the natural reason from claiming and perverting spiritual truth, by the wars with the Greeks which filled so large a place in this period of the history.

A point of interest in this genealogy is the mention of the women who became mothers in the series. In the first fourteen we have mention of Tamar and Rahab and Ruth; in the second, of the wife of Uriah; and in the third, of Mary. Swedenborg tells us but little of their representation; but that little is wholly good. "The Jewish Church is described by Judah, and the genuine church by Tamar," he says*; and again, "the internal of the church here is Tamar, and the external is Judah."† And if Judah represents here the doctrine from the Word in regard to the saving love of God, Tamar, whose name means a palm tree, must represent a genuine affection for such doctrine, not merely as knowledge, nor to gratify selfish pride, but for the sake of life.

Of Rahab we know that she was the woman of Jericho who protected Joshua's spies; whose window was marked by a scarlet thread; and who, with her family, alone of the inhabitants of Jericho was saved, and incorporated in Israel.

* Arcana Cœlestia, 4811. † *Ibid.*, 4831 end.

If Jericho, the city of palm-trees, on the borders of the Jordan, stands for a false security in the teaching of false doctrines of life, Rahab, of good heart although a harlot, represents a good affection which has been perverted by false teaching, but desires to be instructed in the truth and saved by the Lord. She is an affection which in later childhood is willing to repent, and cooperate in establishing a good orderly life.

Ruth, whose name perhaps means a friend, was a Moabitess, innocent and good according to the ways of the time. And as Moab represents a love for what is naturally good and pleasant, in seeking an alliance in Israel, she represents such Gentile love desiring to be instructed in what is genuinely good.

Bathsheba was the wife of Uriah the Hittite. Probably she too was a Hittite. At any rate she represented affection for such truth as is meant by him whose name was "the Light of Jah." The Hittites were remains of the Most Ancient Church* and represent the remains of childhood's

* Arcana Cœlestia, 4447. See also n. 2913, 2940.

innocent love and thought. Therefore Bathsheba represents affection for the light of childhood's thought, uniting itself now with rational thought concerning the Divine with men.

And Mary, whose name means bitterness, betrothed to Joseph, the last representative of the coming Divine, stands for the despairing desire for the opening of the representatives to the Divine Itself — the desire for the Divine truth instead of mere representatives of it.

The whole series is the series of affections for truth for the sake of life, and in the life, by which the successive developments of acquisition of knowledge, of obedience, of enjoyment, of rational enlightenment, of the truth of God are attained. They are the series of affections by which the Son of Man attains His full development.

THE GENEALOGY IN LUKE.

THE building the mind into forms of truth, by learning it, understanding it, and living it, is called reformation. The descent of love from God into the will, where it is received as love for good life, is regeneration. To be built into forms of truth is to become the Son of Man. To receive the love of God into the heart and life is to become the Son of God. Reformation precedes, and regeneration follows as man overcomes evil in temptations. Therefore it is said in Luke that after Jesus was baptized, "the heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in Thee I am well pleased." And then immediately follows the genealogy of Jesus the Son of God.

The genealogy as given in Matthew begins with

Abraham and leads up to the birth of Jesus — tracing the developments of knowledge and obedience, of understanding and conflict, of vastation of the self-intelligence and self-love, till the love of God could be manifested through Him who was the perfect Son of Man.

The genealogy of Luke begins with Jesus as He enters upon His Divine ministry at about thirty years of age, and traces His return through all the stages of His inheritance up to God. For it is the law of regeneration that when one has attained the full development of his manhood, he must return and become again a little child. In the return the later states come up first, and successively those which are earlier. And it is not now the truth or the intelligence of the states that he cares for, but the love and the trustfulness.

First he revises the feelings and thoughts of his manhood, chastens its pride, thoroughly humbles its self-love, strengthens its acknowledgment that none is good but God, and its contentment in doing day by day the will of God. Then he

comes to the ideals of youth, whose foolish exultations and ambitions he humbles severely, substituting for its love of clear, bright thoughts the desire to understand the Lord's teaching of what is wholly wise and helpful. And so he comes back to the open-hearted innocence and trust of childhood's obedience, which he renews and makes unhesitating; and of childhood's love of knowing what is of God and heaven, which he deepens by the contrast with his experience of evil.

Perhaps it is because of the difference in the things regarded, the rejection of so much that is of mere intellect, and the strengthening of the less observed states of affection, that the line of Luke passes by the kings, and follows, or appears to follow, the line of personal descent; taking up again the same line with Matthew when they reach David, who represents the youthful ideal of the rule of the Divine in the Human, and the period of the Judges, where the child's obedience needs only to be strengthened and perfected.

But the line of Luke does not stop with Abra-

ham, where that of Matthew began, but goes back through the succession of churches before the time of Abraham, as described in the eleventh and the fifth chapters of Genesis, to Seth and Adam, and to God. For before the awakening of the childhood's love of knowing, there are some years of innocent joys in the opening of the senses, and in happy trustful love, of which there is little or no memory. And back of this lie the human possibilities formed in the embryo by loving influences from God and heaven, then immediately present, by virtue of which God and heaven can ever be present in the interiors of the soul, however the exteriors may be perverted.

Nearly the same was true with the Lord. Before His coming into the world, the Divine was revealed to men through the heavens which were filled with the Spirit of the Lord, under the influence of which an angel of the Lord spake with men, or did mighty works of God. This Divine of the Lord in the heavens, Swedenborg tells us, was the Divine Human before the Incarnation.

And he adds that the human assumed in the world was superinduced upon this in Him Who was born into the world. That is to say, there were in His human spirit planes receptive of the Divine, answering to the planes of the heavens, formed by the influence of the Divine through the heavens as full as could be borne. And in the inmost plane, where in all other men is the inmost finite receptacle of the life of God, in Him was God Jehovah Himself unlimited. Now it is to be remembered that the heavens which were the mediums of the Divine influence in His spirit, were from the churches that had existed upon the earth, whose quality is described in the genealogies of Genesis. Therefore the enumeration of these is really a description of the Divine influences embodied in the heavens, by which the interior planes of His spirit were formed — those between Abraham and Noah representing the happy states of sense development, when every natural impression is filled with something of life from heaven ; and those before the flood represent-

ing the forms impressed upon the embryo by the immediate presence of God and heaven.

No man upon the earth ever knows what is stored up in his soul, or the deep possibilities of it. After the death of the body, when the spirit is prepared for heaven, new depths of consciousness are opened in it, answering to the depths which were formed in the embryo by the influence of the heavens, of which nothing was known during the life upon earth. But in the Lord, in the regeneration of His human nature, all that entered into it became sensible to Him, even to the inmosts of the human soul, where the Divine Life dwelt. "No man hath seen God at any time," He said; "the only begotten Son Who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." "Not that any man hath seen the Father, save He that is of God; He hath seen the Father."

In the great story of human life which we call the Bible, the first truly historical characters, the first remembered figures, are those of Abraham and his immediate ancestors. The long list of

names back of these stand not for persons, but for religions, or states of the church, the description of which has come down in this form from prehistoric antiquity. They stand for the unremembered childhood of the race, for the most part innocent, open to the Lord and heaven, yet, because it is subject to the will of man, having possible tendencies to violent evils. As we have seen, the men of that childhood in its good states, constitute the heavens nearest the Lord; and from them in part come the influences which mould the unconscious child's soul into forms of heaven, which can afterward rise into heaven and live the life of heaven. And therefore the series of names which describes the descent of the churches, is a true description of the formation of the soul with its possibilities of life, even from God. And these in the Lord's human life were all successively opened to Him even to the inmost.

It is not surprising that the Lord's mind, returning through the stores successively laid up

from earliest infancy to manhood, should see them in a different light from that in which they appeared at the first. It is not now the truth that is of interest, but the good; not the knowledge and the intelligence, but the love of use, of obedience, of innocent trust. Back through all the states of life He passed, bringing every one to the perfect form of the love of God. The powers of manhood became powers of protecting, saving, and blessing from the Father's love, with absolutely no reflection upon self. The ideals of life became a joy in the beauty of love. The willingness to obey the truth became a boundless love for the ways in which the Father's love might dwell. The love of knowing of God and heaven, was winnowed of every trace of pride of knowledge, and became a pure love of God Himself. The child's delight in sense impressions became a joy in every thing that expressed and revealed the Father's love. And so away through depths of inner consciousness that we cannot follow, at length the very desire for life independent of the

Father was put off; the self-life was absolutely laid down; there was no life in the Human but the Father's love; the Human from inmost to outmost became the Love of God perfectly brought forth, working Divinely in human ways to unite Itself with men, and men with Itself.*

* I see no reason to doubt the common explanation, that the marked differences in the lines from Solomon to Shealtiel arise from tracing the line, in the one case officially through the Kings to the childless Jechoniah, and in the other personally through Nathan the brother of Solomon to Shealtiel who succeeded Jechoniah; and the lesser differences in the remainder of the line seem to be also reasonably explained. The fact that the generations from the carrying into Babylon to Christ as given in Matthew number only thirteen, and the other matter of the insertion of a Cainan or Kenan in Luke between Arpachshad and Shelah, which does not appear in Genesis, will probably be explained when more perfect copies of the text are found. It is idle to attempt to interpret, before we are sure of our basis.

THE COMING OF THE LORD IN THE WORD.

THE Gospel story in its literal sense is the story of the real coming of God to men, in the early development of the rationality of the race.*

The natural sense of the Gospels relates to the natural reception of the Divine in the lives of men, which was the essence and substance of the Christian Church, and the spring of life of a new Christian civilization.

On the same plane also is the coming of the Lord now, into the experience of men, normally in their early youth, as a power to restrain evil, and to inspire new affections for good life.

* This period was represented by the Kings, especially by David. Hence the Lord was called the Son of David. The Kings themselves belonged to the period of the first natural rationality, and did not receive any but natural ideals. But they represented the reception of spiritual ideals in the natural, which the Lord afterward brought to pass.

But this first coming of the Lord is itself representative of His second coming to a more advanced state of rational development both of the race and of the individual — the state in which the pride of intelligence and the appropriation to self of the holy things of Christian worship and life are ready for judgment, that the pure love of the Lord may be received and do its work; while man humbly and gratefully acknowledges it as the Lord's, fearing and dreading any appropriation to self.

It is in this sense that the genealogy has been interpreted, as leading up to Joseph, who stands for the good of life which is capable of being enlightened and rationally understanding the Divine of the Lord in the Word, and is the husband of Mary — the affection for the Divine truth which is the Lord Himself — the truth of His own life.

The lesson of the conception is that the reality of the Lord's presence in the Word is not first received by the rational understanding, but the goodness of it appeals directly

CHAPTER I. 18.

to the affection for truth, and it is received and cherished as true before it is rationally understood.

And as this is not what the understanding would expect, it doubts the legitimacy of it; but can be instructed that it is really of the Lord, and as the Lord should come; and then it unites with the affection for it in caring for and protecting it. Mary was afterward the wife of Joseph, because the understanding when enlightened does interpret the truth of the Lord's life to the affection for it, though the affection has been first to recognize it.

This coming of the Lord is indeed in the spiritual sense of the Word; but a knowledge of the spiritual sense is not the coming of the Lord — for this can be taught from books, and committed to memory; neither is the rational understanding of it, the coming of the Lord — for this may be had by mental training and combined with much pride of intelligence. The Lord may indeed be present in such knowledge, and introduced by such understanding; but He is received by the heart, when He is recognized and loved as the Divine Love

uniting Itself with men in a good life according to the Commandments.

He was received in this way naturally in His first coming, and now also both naturally and spiritually in His second coming. And the difference is that to the life of benevolence and usefulness from His Spirit as received at first, is added in maturer regenerate states, the rational understanding of the glorification of the Lord's Human, and the regeneration of men by following in His footsteps — both of which are fully taught in the spiritual sense of the Word. There is also added the dread born of long and hard experience, of the pride of holiness and the pride of understanding* — the shunning of which will forever preserve the sense of the new life as the Lord's, given of the

* A new development of rationality has come to the race, especially in the growth of the European peoples, the youthful pride in which has brought the Church to a sterile end of intellect or faith alone. The prophecy of the birth of the Lord, not begotten of man (ISAIAH vii. 14), promises new life from God when this intellect shall be judged. It is this intellect which first seizes upon the new truth, and which must be humbled before the Lord can reign in His Church.

Divine Mercy to men who are in themselves only vile and evil.

In Bethlehem, the House of Bread, the Lord was born, because He was the living Bread by which heavenly spirits are nourished. In the land of Judah it was, because this represents the plane of the mind in which the love of God should be known. "In the days of Herod the king," means when the pride of self-intelligence ruled in the church. For Herod was an Edomite, and in the evil sense Edom means "pride in one's own intelligence, and falsity from it, destroying the church."*

CHAPTER II.

The wise men of the east were a remnant of ancient churches, having the remains of ancient wisdom; and they represent the surviving wisdom of childhood's innocence and trustfulness. This recognizes the Lord as King of the church, and offers the acknowledgment that His human presence in the heart is itself life from the love of God, the delight of spiritual intelligence, and the

* Apocalypse Explained, 410.

healing and protection of natural truth — represented by the gold, the frankincense, and the myrrh, presented by the wise men.

It is interesting to note that the young life was carried to Egypt, and there protected by Joseph — as once before, under the Divine Providence, a Joseph went down into Egypt to save life, and to lay the foundation of a new nation and a new church. To two different periods the two Josephs belong — the one to the period of childhood's love of knowing, and the other to the maturer love of understanding. "The celestial of the spiritual" is the technical formula by which Swedenborg describes the quality represented by Joseph. And by this he means the love which is the root of faith in the Lord, and is capable of being instructed in Divine things.

The Joseph of the early days represents the child's love for the Divine in the Word and in the story of the Lord's life, which places the knowledge of this above all other knowledge. The Joseph of the later days represents the young

man's love for that which is of God, which sees the difference between what is of God and what is of men, and rationally acknowledges the Divine in the Lord. This it is that is capable of being instructed in the spiritual sense of the Word.

And besides these there was another Joseph, high in the councils of the Jews, who, when the Lord was crucified by the urgent insistence of the Jews, courageously begged for the body, and with all possible honor laid it in his own new tomb. And he stands for the love for the Lord which when the pride of spiritual intelligence and of holiness, or elation in the possession of spiritual truth, rejects the Divine life of love and service, courageously defies it, and asks for itself no hope of heaven but in that love from the Lord alone.

The Egypt to which the young child was carried, was at that time the land of learning. There were the great libraries of the world and the schools of learning. It was the depository of the knowledge of representative worship of all the old world. Into this atmosphere of study and learn-

ing the Lord was taken, probably at the time when His own love of knowing began to be awakened; and we are not going beyond the evident meaning if we think of His mind as stored there with representative forms of every kind, and having some intuition of what they meant. Just at what age this took place is not clear. Herod slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, from two years old and under — or, as some understand, from the second year — according to the time that he had diligently inquired of the wise men. We may infer that He was not over two years old. Even this is young for the love of knowledge to awaken; but we know that His states did progress much more rapidly than those of other men.

The significance of this as regards the second coming of the Lord, is that after the first recognition of the Divine in the spiritual sense of the Word, must follow a state of instruction in the representatives by which the Word is written.

Herod's slaying all the boys in Bethlehem from two years old and under, represents the extinction

of all genuine truth of the Divine presence with men, by the pride of intelligence — the two years meaning the sense of the love of the Lord in the truth. Rachel is affection for genuine spiritual truth from the Word, which mourns when the truth is lost.

In Nazareth, which seems to mean Seclusion, the next long period of the Lord's life was passed. It was the period in which He was learning to live the Divine life according to the truth of the Word. He did not come forth until the natural self had so far given place to the Divine, that whatever He did and said was from the love of the Father for saving men, and was a revelation of that love. And this represents the long period of instruction in spiritual truth, which is necessary to introduce the spiritual life.

His first appearance was at the baptism of John; where, by submitting to be baptized, He testified to the cleansing of the natural life by the truth of the Word. And where also the dove descending and lighting upon

CHAPTER III.

Him testified to the reception of the Spirit of God in the Human, according to its purification. The voice from heaven testified to the Divine satisfaction in the human work among men.

The story of the three temptations following, is a representative account of the conflicts between the evil influx received by the natural self, and the Divine Spirit, interpreted by the Word.

CHAPTER IV.

The first is the temptation of the barren reformatory state, when the understanding leads, to be content with truths alone, and the ascetic power of resistance ; ceasing the effort to sow the Divine seed and reap the harvest of love and good.

The second temptation — in Matthew, to cast Himself down from the pinnacle of the temple — is the temptation of weak human nature to demand that the Divine should give the good of regenerate holy states without doing its part in laying down the self-life. It is the temptation expressed in the words: "If it be possible, let this

cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not My will but Thine be done." Of this also He said: "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He shall presently give Me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?"

The third, in the offer of all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, is the temptation to use His power for the exaltation of self, and not for the Divine work of subduing self. It is illustrated by the turbulence of the sea when the multitude, excited by the miracle of the loaves, would have made Him a King. And He came quietly walking upon the sea to represent the victory in such temptation.

They are classes of temptations endured not once for all, but throughout the regenerating life. The desire to be content with truth is distinctly youthful, but is not wholly overcome until good has absolute rule. The desire to be borne up in lofty states, without the labor of temptations, also begins early. Perhaps we have some expression

of it in the attempt to do the Father's work in the temple at the age of twelve; when, nevertheless, whatever disappointment He may have felt, He went back to Nazareth with Mary and Joseph, and was subject unto them. And so again, the desire for natural position and power does not first show itself late in life, though it may be late in wholly giving way.*

It is worthy of note that all the answers of the Lord are from the Book of Deuteronomy, though with reference to what has been described or said in Exodus;† for the Book of Deuteronomy contains the Law as it appears at the close of the wilderness journey when the rule of love is at hand.

The ministry of angels when the devil left Him,

* Possibly the reversing the order of the second and third in Luke means that Matthew's third was the more external and easier to overcome — Matthew, as in the Genealogies, giving the order of development of the natural human, and Luke that of the Divine development. Both call the tempter, "Satan," in answer to the promise of the glory of the world — implying that it was a false illusion, more external than the other.

† DEUTERONOMY viii. 3; vi. 13 (x. 20); vi. 16. EXODUS xvi.; xvii. 1; xxxiv. 14.

is the reception of Divine things as evils are removed.

Thus began the Lord's public ministry, when He was about thirty years of age, and perhaps in early February. For if we allow forty days for the temptations, then the journey to Cana and the sojourn of "not many days" at Capernaum will bring us near the end of March, when "the Jews' Passover was at hand." That Passover, with the first cleansing of the temple and the conversation with Nicodemus, was the beginning of the Judean ministry. It lasted apparently until January; for when He left Judea and passed through Samaria, on the way to Galilee, it lacked only four months of harvest time. It had been a season of diligent teaching, the results of which, both friendly and unfriendly, were to appear later.

A few weeks follow of which no account is given, and then we hear again of a feast of the Jews,* and of another visit to Jerusalem, with more

* JOHN v.

healing, and more preaching of the presence of the Heavenly Father in Him, which was the burden of the Judean message. But of all this, from the time of the temptations, Matthew tells us nothing. His mission is to tell of the giving of the Christian Law, and the application of the law to the plane of natural life, which is represented by Galilee. He takes up the story "When Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison," that is, in the second spring of His ministry, while still in Judea.

Then the Lord left Judea, and departed into Galilee. For the imprisonment of John by Herod meant that lustfulness so far controlled the world that it could no longer be openly taught that adultery was a sin against God. The moral law was no longer taught as the law of God; though, from regard for appearances, it was preserved, and not yet wholly rejected, that the shameless love of evil might have full sway — as happened later, when Herod beheaded John for Salome's sake.

The basis for the presence of God in the lives

of men was departing. And yet this must always be present, that man may be saved. Therefore the Lord Himself came into that Galilee which represents the plane of natural conduct, and Himself took up the teaching of the Divine presence in a life, as to thought and affection as well as in form, according to the Ten Commandments.

In Nazareth He had attained that union of the Divine with the truth of life, from which He was to teach. Nazareth was in the tribe of Zebulon, which means such uniting together. But with the people of Nazareth there had been a different uniting of the love of evil with their false interpretations of the Scriptures. Not there could His teaching be received. So, "leaving Nazareth, He came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zebulon," but in the domain of Naphtali. The life in Nazareth had been on the plane of thought and intent of good life. The life in Capernaum was upon the plane of act, and of conflict with evil. It was appropriate that this should be in Naphtali, for Naphtali

means strugglings, or, spiritually, temptations. Capernaum perhaps means literally, the Village of Consolations — a good name for His home in the time of strugglings.

Here by the borders of the sea, the confines of spiritual life in natural, the people which now had no idea of the presence of God in the life of men, "saw great light, and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death, light is sprung up."

A few disciples who had been previously drawn to Him at the Baptism of John by the Jordan were now gathered together; and with them, training them to the Divine service, He "went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people."

Thus Matthew summarizes the opening of the ministry in Galilee. Certain typical instances of healing, typical of the effect of His teaching, and of His presence with men, are related in chronological order by Mark and Luke. But Matthew

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gathers first a summary of the teaching, and then exhibits the types of the effect of it.

This summary of the Lord's teaching of the Divine law of life, we know as the Sermon on the Mount. It begins with pronouncing blessings upon the poor in spirit, the mourning, the meek, the hungering and thirsting, and all who are in heart in the ways of life taught by the Ten Commandments. John had taught the Commandments as the necessary preparation for the coming of the Lord. Such teaching had been forbidden and restrained. And now the Lord came teaching of the joy of the Divine love in such ways of life, as the ways of the life of God on earth. From the power of that love in Himself He taught, and restored forever the moral law as the Divine law of human life — established forever by His own love for it.

CHAPTER V.

The parallel between the Blessings and the Commandments is familiar, and will probably be plain to one who will study the interpretation of the two in the Book of Rites and Sacraments for

the New Church. The remainder of the fifth chapter of Matthew contains upon the face of it an expansion of the same principles, offering many parallels to the "Book of the Covenant" in Deuteronomy, which is likewise an expansion of the Commandments in a somewhat varied order.

The sixth chapter contains teaching of another kind. Luke places this teaching in the third, the last, winter of the Lord's ministry, after He had left Galilee and sent forth the seventy, and was abiding in Peræa, before the last journey to Jerusalem. The fifth chapter has contained the principles of outward conduct, including those of the thought and affection which are the essential substance of the conduct. The sixth contains no new principles of conduct, but the conditions of the Divine blessing in the good life. It does not teach men to give alms. To do good and lend, hoping for nothing again, has already been taught. But it says: "When thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth; that thine alms may be in secret; and thy

CHAPTER VI.

Father Who seeth in secret shall reward thee openly." That is, if the satisfaction of reflecting upon the importance of what one does is the satisfaction sought in doing it, this he may have. But he has not the Lord except in doing it as the Lord's work, with no reflection at all upon self.

And so with prayer. If to appear well before men or the self-satisfaction of pious forms, be one's purpose, this he may have. But there is no communing with the Lord, and no answer from Him, except in the depths of one's heart, when one earnestly desires the Divine help, and the good of the Divine life according to the Divine laws.

In fasting, again, or humbling the natural man, the self indulges or glorifies the natural man by parading its afflictions — whereby their benefit to the spiritual man is lost. It is the gladness of the inner thought, in the hope of a purer life, freed from self even through affliction, that the Lord can comfort and bless.

The treasures of the heavenly life are distinctly presented as the only treasures to be sought. It

is pointed out that when from a single-hearted love of good, one sees the truth, the whole life is guided wisely. But if a root of self guides the thought, it guides it into darkness. And the necessity is shown for choosing between the world and the Lord, that there may be no reserve in serving the Lord with all the soul and heart, with no secret reference to one's own advantage. And then the beautiful appeal is made to the fowls of the air and the lilies of the field, as illustrating the Heavenly Father's care, and showing how innocent and beautiful life is that is not distorted by man's self, but is lived naturally and simply from God as God's. This, then, should be the ideal — to live from God as simply and naturally as they, with as absolute a trust as they; yet with the human knowledge and acknowledgment of the Divine which they have not.

And now the discourse turns toward the final judgment, and the relation of the soul to God. The reference to self which is natural to one's thought, is by nature dispara-

CHAPTER VII.

ging to others. It loves to exalt and justify self, and therefore to see and exaggerate faults in others. It judges harshly; it metes out hard measure. To cast out first one's own desire to justify self, surrendering wholly to the Spirit of the Lord, is to look upon others with kind eyes, to see clearly and helpfully, to prepare one's self for the judgment of mercy.

To give not that which is holy unto the dogs, nor to cast the pearls before swine, is a warning that holy truths and knowledge of salvation are not to be held in the service of the lusts of appropriating everything good to self; for these will destroy them, and destroy also the soul.

These evil ways of the self are in strongest contrast to the Divine ways. To every one who sincerely asks Him for good, the Father gives it; every one who sincerely seeks the truth of good life, He causes to find it; and to every one who desires to enter an interior, better state of life, He opens it.

Natural good even the evil will give to their

own, much more will the Lord give spiritual good to His own — not, as appears to the natural man, mere condemnatory truths to one who desires the enjoyment of good life, nor stinging discouragement to one who desires a knowledge of good life; but things which he knows to be good, from Himself in heaven. To give to others what is good to Himself is the law of His life. That men should do the same is the whole lesson of the Scriptures which He has given them.

The destroying way of the self-life was broad and easy, and the Lord found very many pressing into it. The way of heaven seemed strait and narrow, not merely because it restrained the wandering desires, but because so few were seeking it.*

Scribes and Pharisees were teaching as the good of the church that which was not good, solely that they might be honored and made rich. They were to be judged by their fruits. The wisdom of charity did not come from teachings of

* Heaven and Hell, 534.

exclusive holiness, nor kindly helpfulness from the stinging of contemptuous thoughts. But as are the thoughts of the heart, so is the real quality of the life — helpful and kindly if these be good, evil and hurtful if they be evil.

Then follows the warning that not mere knowledge of Him, nor teaching about Him, nor combating errors, nor even wonderful success in converting many* really means life from the Lord. If these things be not from love for the Lord and love for souls, but with the inner thought upon self and the world, they are all of evil.

And the discourse closes with the parable of the wise man who built his house upon a rock — the Rock being the Lord in his heart, and his house his life, which stands protected and safe under the wildest storms of temptation; and of the foolish man who built his house upon the sand — the sand being not the Lord, but knowledge about Him; and the house the life based upon this but with no living hold of the Lord; which gives way immediately, with the angry destruction of all pro-

*Apocalypse Explained, 624.

fessions of faith, when it appears plainly that there is no advantage to self in them.

This is the Sermon. It begins with the blessings of a life according to the Commandments. It opens and expands the Commandments in their application to the affections as well as to the acts of conduct.

It shows the conditions of life from God in the conduct — that there be in it no reflection upon self; that it be full of prayer for life from God; that there be cheerful willingness in the humiliation of self; that the Lord and heaven be chosen as the ends of life; that the life be held freely and naturally as His, with absolute trust in Him.

It teaches of the mercy of the Heavenly Father's love, and of the charity with which men should regard one another; encourages perseverance in the way which at first seems strait and narrow; and the bringing forth patiently the fruits of the Divine life. It builds the Christian life upon the Lord.

No other word could be added.

Not as the scribes, from learning, did the Lord teach these things; but from His life. He told simply of the life He loved, of the life He was. His words were the absolute truth of Divine human life. They were the truth, and the standard of truth.

EFFECTS OF THE LORD'S PREACHING IN THE NATURAL LIFE.

THE Christian law has been given, the law which shows the possibilities of human life from the Spirit of God.

The chapters which immediately follow, relate to the working out of this law in the natural life; later comes the application to the spiritual life; and lastly to the inmost life, which brings full conjunction of the Divine with the Human, or, in the lesser degrees, of the Lord with man. This is the whole of the story of Matthew.

CHAPTER VIII.

As regards the natural life, we have first, a short series of beneficent works — the healing of a leper, of the palsied servant of the centurion, of Peter's wife's mother, the first stilling of the sea, the casting out of the swinish devils, the healing

of another paralytic, also of the woman who touched His garments, the raising of the ruler's daughter, the opening the eyes of the blind and the lips of the dumb.

The first effect of the teaching of the Christian law from the Divine love for what is good and pure and orderly, showing the possibilities of a life free from self, full of the Spirit of God, was, as it still is, to reveal the deadness of the outward forms of ordinary life. There were forms of orderly conduct, of piety, of service; but there was no sense of the Spirit of the Lord in them. They were merely natural, conventional, full of self, with no spiritual life in them.* And this sense of

* Cicero well illustrates the state of the world in this respect: — "But this indeed all mortals hold thus — that external goods, vineyards, corn-fields, olive-yards, the abundance of crops and fruits, in fine, every outward advantage and good fortune, they have from the gods; but virtue no one ever credits to a god. . . . Who ever thanked the gods because he was a good man? but because he was rich, honored, or safe. *De Natura Deorum. Liber* III. § 86, 87.

"At that time there were not any spiritual men, because the church was altogether destroyed; but they were all natural." Swedenborg, in "The Apocalypse Explained," n. 513.

"Spiritual good is not given at the present day, but only natural good with some." "The Last Judgment," n. 38.

the deadness of the outward life, with no vital connection with God, is a spiritual leprosy. No one will doubt that the touch of Jesus did bring a sense of new life from God into the life of man, and made the dead forms of worship and of goodness live.

The next effect of the reception of the Christian law, represented by healing the centurion's servant, was the renewing of the life of obedience to moral and civil law as a duty to God.

Rome stood for moral and civil law, not now spiritual, yet spiritual in its origin, and capable of again forming a basis for spiritual life. The Roman centurion, or captain of a hundred, was the representative of such law remaining. In the best days of the Roman Republic, the spirit of obedience to law as the highest duty, gave examples of civic virtue, and devotion to the public good, perhaps the most splendid that are recorded in History. But the republic was changing to the empire. The idea of the will of God as embodied in the law, was giving place to the idea of the ar-

bitrary will of man. The joy of obedience to the law as a duty to God was gone. The servant of the centurion was palsied.*

The Lord by His example and by His love for the law as the way of the Divine Love upon the earth, restored the joy of obedience, and a zeal of loyalty to the right, as a duty to God. The spirit of love for the law as expressed in the hundred and nineteenth Psalm, is the Spirit of the Lord, and is the life of the new Christian civilization which the Lord has raised up. It is built upon Him; and His love for the Divine law bears it up. Israel and the modern successors of Israel may ignore it; but many shall come from the east and from the west, and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven — the foundations of which are laid by a love of obeying the Divine law as the law of life from God.

* For an admirable account of the failure of the ancient loyalty and the establishment of the new, see Dean Church's lectures on Roman Civilization, and Civilization after Christianity, in "Gifts of Civilization:" The Macmillan Co.

In Peter's house, his wife's mother was laid, and sick of a fever. Peter stands for the new faith, and his wife for the enjoyment in the life according to it. Her mother stands for the enjoyment or good of the former faith — more formal and literal, with much hope of reward. Her fever is from fear of the loss of the good she had, in the new and wiser ways of doing good which the Lord taught. Thus, for example, the change in the keeping of the Sabbath, from the formal representative passiveness, to the Christian laying aside of self for the sake of instruction in truth and of doing works of charity, must have caused much disturbance to the faithful, until they received the true Sabbath spirit from the Lord. The Lord's touch gave her hand a pleasure in the wiser service which He himself loved to do and to teach. Her faithful loyalty gained a new expansion; and she arose and ministered unto them.

With the word of His own new life from God, He relieved men from the pressure of many evils and discouragements, that their life on this plane of natural conduct and use might be full.

But there was another plane of life, that of recreation, by enjoyment of natural pleasures of instruction, of beauty, of food, of repose; and this was represented by the other side of the sea, whither the Lord took His disciples to rest. Not strictly of the Holy Land, yet occupied by the half tribe of Manasseh, this land of Bashan represented the plane of recreation, which is not in itself spiritual, yet is essential to the support of the spiritual life. Jesus gave commandment to depart thither. And then to a certain scribe who offered to follow Him, He said: "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head." That is, in the outer natural man to which He was going there are abiding places for deceitful lusts, and thoughts for self, but no rest for the truth of God. And to another who would first bury his father — representing the preserving and saving of selfish desire, while one tries to follow the Lord too — He said, "Follow Me, and let the dead bury their dead" — that is, give it up wholly,

leave it with the things that are past and gone — the two little incidents illustrating the thoroughness of self-surrender with which the Lord would have men live the truth of God.

Passing over to the other side, "there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves; but He was asleep." He was going to the plane of natural enjoyment and upbuilding, now occupied by swine and lovers of swine. He was about to cast out the greed for self which naturally possesses that part of the mind, and bring instead a peaceful, orderly enjoyment in the good and beautiful things of nature and of truth, which serve for illustration, delight, and support to an orderly life from God. The tumultuous resistance of the natural loves was imaged by the tempest in the sea; the apparent absence of Divine care and control of natural enjoyments, by His sleeping; but the new sense of His presence and power in this outward life, by His awaking, and rebuking the waves and the sea. His absolute power to subdue and control the dis-

orderly appetites of the body, was both manifested and represented by His casting out the many devils; which took on their true form when they entered into the swine, and then rushed down into the sea, which was a representative of their hell. Would that that whole domain of the mind would love to sit at the feet of Jesus clothed and in its right mind, a clean and orderly support to good life from the Lord in man, and hanker no more after the swine! With all who sincerely desire it, this will be the case when the body is put off.

CHAPTER IX.

The Lord returned to the scene of His labor of applying the law to the outward life, which Matthew calls, "His own city." And again they bring to Him a paralytic — not now a centurion's servant, representing the need of a new love of obedience to law as the law of God; but one who needed the encouraging words, "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee." The Lord had just cast out the swinish devils, and now, returning to the plane of conduct and service, it is represented that

the motive for useful service has been so largely to obtain means for swinish indulgence, that when the evil of this is seen and judged, paralysis follows. The paralysis is healed by the removal of the selfish motive, and the reception of new motives from the Spirit of the Lord, in those who trust in Him and serve obediently. To go to the house is to return to normal states of usefulness. To take up the bed is to carry into the usefulness the trust in the Lord, which recognized the control of the Lord over the appetites of the body, and suffices to bring one to the Lord, but not until now has experience of the joy of orderly life, free from selfish ends, from the Spirit of the Lord.

Matthew, whose other name was Levi, and who stands in the series of the apostles for the blessedness of a life according to the Commandments, now follows the Lord ; though before, for selfish gain, he had sat "at the receipt of custom." And many other publicans and sinners sat down to meat with Jesus and His disciples — standing for

the many selfish motives of gain and pleasure, which now give way to the Lord's own joy in an orderly life according to the truth. He had not come merely to preach repentance, but to bring the kingdom of heaven. The disciples of John and of the Pharisees might fast, in humility or for show, but His disciples were at a marriage feast, and were entering into the joys of a marriage life that was good as well as true. They were to live a new life, in which the formal representatives of the old life were out of place.

Then came the ruler of the synagogue, whose little daughter, representing a spiritual affection for truth, was "even now dead;" but who said, "Come, and lay Thy hand upon her, and she shall live." Jesus arose and followed him. But before He could revive the little daughter, He must heal the woman with the issue of blood — who represents the vain longing and effort to do good, without knowing how.

His garments are His presentation of good life. The hem or fringe of them is the formulation of it

in precepts of what is to be done or not to be done. To touch this is to have the efforts wisely directed, with no more waste. When this is accomplished, the spiritual affection for truth may be revived; for the essence of the spiritual as distinguished from the merely natural, is to love truth for the sake of use, and not for the mere knowing.

The blind men, who, bound by the old formal teaching, could see neither good nor truth, now, under the influence of His genuine teaching and life, see both plainly. And he who, possessed by the old self-life, had no belief in God to confess, now, from the joy of the new life, can both confess and praise Him.

It was a new life, never before so received in the church. To those who were so full of self that they could conceive of no other motive, it was the pretence of a supreme selfishness. But the good tidings of the kingdom of heaven went forth, and the Spirit of the Lord brought health and happy life wherever He was received.

These are briefly the vivifying effects of the Lord's love for the Divine commandments, when received in the plane of conduct. It brings a living connection between the Divine and what are otherwise dead forms. It kindles a new joy in obedience to law as a duty to God. It changes a merely formal service to a service of usefulness. It removes infestations and discouragements, that the life may be free. It subdues and controls the appetites of the body. It substitutes for motives of self-indulgence, an enjoyment in usefulness from the Spirit of the Lord. And for many disorderly motives it brings the love of orderly life according to the truth. It is not merely repressive; it brings new and purer joys in the place of the old. It furnishes a Divine guidance to all efforts to do good; and kindles a spiritual affection for the truth for the sake of use. It opens the eyes to see things as they really are; and the lips to praise the God of life.

This completes the series of the effects of the Lord's preaching in the natural life.

THE INSTRUCTION AND GATHERING TOGETHER OF THOSE WHO WILL RECEIVE THE LORD.

THE apostles now first are sent forth, the whole nature of their message having been made plain. They are twelve, representing as many forms of reception of the Lord's message. Arranged in three groups of four each, they may be regarded as, first, a celestial series, from hearing to love — Simon and Andrew, James and John; second, a spiritual series, from understanding to the blessedness of the life of truth — Philip and Bartholomew, Thomas and Matthew; and, lastly, a natural series, from enjoyment in doing good, to, in its redeemed, regenerate form, a despairing confession of the failure of the self, and full ascription of all to the Lord — James, the son of Alpheus, and Lebbeus, Simon the zealot and Judas Iscariot.

CHAPTER X.

These were to bear the message of the Lord, and, from the Spirit of the Lord, do for others what He had done for them. They were not to turn aside to those confirmed in evil and falsity, but go to those who desired to be good. They were to preach of the Divine goodness and truth of the Lord, and teach the way of life from Him. They were to overcome evils and discouragements, and teach freely the new joy in life which the Lord was giving them. They were not to claim any truth of life as their own, nor to seek any satisfaction to self-love. They were not to be both their own and the Lord's, but the Lord's alone. They were to go in the love of saving, and abide in the love of saving, and bring the peace of the Lord and heaven to all who would receive it. They were to be innocent and prudent, speaking not from themselves, but as the Lord should give them to speak. Evil would fight against them and falsity, but the Lord would protect His own; no real harm could come to them. Suffering would only make them more fully the Lord's.

Conflict there would necessarily be between the self-life and the new life from the Lord. If one adhered to the self he would lose the Lord; crucifying it for the Lord's sake, he would find the Lord. To love the truth for the sake of truth, and good for the sake of good, would make them forms of truth and good, with the joy of them. Every least exercise of charity from obedience to the Lord would bring something of heaven into the life.

THE RELATION TO JOHN'S TEACHING.

THERE were those who loved evil and falsity, who would hate and resist the Lord. But there were also those in more literal states of understanding and life, who would doubt, and for a time not be able to receive. John in the prison represents such literal truth, denied by the world as Divine law, but held as a useful servant of the civil law. They who are in such truth look for a more manifest kingdom to justify their faith. A spiritual kingdom hardly seems to them real. Hence John's question — "Art thou He that should come, or look we for another?"

The answer was in the good that the presence of the Lord was doing to the souls and lives of men; and that they who loved the literal truth for the good that it would do, should find no stum-

bling block in the truth of the Lord's Spirit, which was doing much greater good.

Then follows a comparison between the literal truth and the spiritual; both justified as the children of wisdom; one the necessary preparation for the other. The letter of the Word, as men interpreted it, was turned to justify everything; it was a reed shaken by every wind.* It was a rude outer garment for the soft and shining truth of the inner life. It was the truth from God, sent before His face to prepare the way for Himself. Among the teachers of such truth, the outer form of which was born of men, the greatest was John, who gathered its essential lessons into one, and applied them to prepare men for the Lord. And yet the least understanding of the spirit of the Law as the Lord revealed it, was greater than he. The representatives of the Lord and His kingdom had lasted until John; but now the Lord had opened the kingdom itself, and men were forcibly and eagerly taking possession of it.

* Arcana Cœlestia, 9372.

The church of that generation rejected them both. As children in their plays imitate the processions of the funerals and the weddings — wailing to their fellows, or piping; and they will respond to neither — so John had taught the sad duty of repentance, and the laying down of natural evil pleasure; and the Lord had brought the glad tidings of a new life of joy from a marriage with His Spirit; and they rejected both. The men of the old time, of Tyre and Sidon and Sodom, had sinned against the literal truth; but the people of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, where the works of His love and truth had been most abounding, were sinning against a far greater light than they.

This part of the story closes with the thanksgiving of the Lord that they who were full of the wisdom and intelligence of evil, did not receive Him; but only those who were innocent, attributing little to self, willing to be led; and with His merciful invitation to all who were laboring with the burdens of the insatiable demands of self, to

take His yoke, which was the yoke of love, and learn from Him to do good, in meekness and lowliness of heart. So should their labor of love be easy, and their burden light.

CONFLICT WITH JEWISH TEACHING.

CHAPTER XII.

WE have followed the beneficent effects of the truth of the Lord's love with the good, the preparation for their instruction and gathering together, the teaching to those in more literal states. Now we come to the teaching of those who are in the evils of the church. The test comes here, as both before and after at Jerusalem, in the keeping of the Sabbath. The Sabbath was instituted as a representative of the peacefulness of the love of God in men, when the labors of conflict with evil are over. The right keeping of the Sabbath was emphasized both by Moses and by the prophets as the evidence of faithfulness to God. The emphasis of the law was naturally placed upon the refraining from labor — the ceasing to do evil, in order that they might

learn to do well. And yet there were not wanting suggestions of the happy life from the Spirit of the Lord, which is the true purpose of the Sabbath — as in the beautiful passage in Isaiah: "If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on My holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of Jehovah, honorable; and shalt honor Him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words; then shalt thou delight thyself in Jehovah; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father; for the mouth of Jehovah hath spoken it." (lviii. 13, 14.)

The Jews had hedged about the keeping of the Sabbath with vexatious guards which no one could fully know, but in keeping which they had the sense of supreme holiness and self-satisfaction. The Lord came, keeping it as the day for the special revealing of the Heavenly Father's love. He led His disciples through the wheat-fields. He was teaching them of heavenly uses, and

doing these before their eyes; and as their minds were fed, they plucked also the ears of the grain, which corresponded to such uses, and did eat. The Pharisees reproved Him for permitting what was not lawful. But the Lord replied that David, whose representative life He was fulfilling, took of the bread of the Divine Presence, and gave to his followers; and He was doing the same.

In their synagogue there was a man whose hand was withered. Their own teaching withered the hand that would do good from God. They asked Him, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath days? that they might accuse Him." He answered, "It is lawful to do well on the Sabbath days," and with the Father's own love of doing good He restored the withered hand.

This brought the issue plainly to view. With them their own pride of holiness was the good of the Sabbath, and the purpose of the church. To Him the revelation of the Father's love and a fuller life from it was the good of the Sabbath, and the purpose of the church. With the issue

thus stated, the Pharisees immediately "held a council against Him, how they might destroy Him;" while He withdrew Himself from thence, that He might show judgment to the Gentiles, who would trust in His name. To the Pharisees now He was as Beelzebub, the prince of the devils; while truly His work was of the Spirit of God. It was not now against human imperfections that they were speaking, but against the Spirit of God. And they who so spoke were evil from the roots, and could never be restored. An evil and adulterous generation they were, like Jonas refusing the truth of God to the suffering world; but He, meeting and overcoming the depths of their evil, would fulfil the mission which they had refused.

The Gentiles would receive the truth reasonably presented, and would repent; but the Jews would not. Among the Gentiles was affection for the truth of heaven; but not with them.

They had the Word of God, and professed to know it; but they had perverted it to confirm

worse evils than those who had it not. Yet there were those who would be brother, and sister, and mother to Him — sharing His end of good, His affection for truth, His love of doing the will of the Father in heaven.

There follows immediately, "the same day," the parable of the Sower, and of the several kinds of rejection and reception that the Word would meet; also of the tares and the wheat, which must grow together until the harvest; and many parables illustrating the preciousness of the kingdom of heaven, and its separation from the evil.

CHAPTER XIII.

Then is recounted His rejection at Nazareth, here called "His own country," the beginning of His rejection in Galilee; of which it is only to be said that as His own sojourn in that place of Seclusion in the tribe of Zebulon represented His labor of uniting the good of the Father's love with the truth, so there was there a perverse uniting of evil with falsity in those who were related only to the outer nature which He was putting off.

DEATH OF JOHN.

NOW Herod says of Jesus, "This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead; and therefore mighty works do show forth themselves in him," which, in an important sense, was the truth.

CHAPTER XIV.

A study of his genealogy I think will show that "that fox," Herod Antipas, son of Herod the Great, stands for and was the lust of falsifying, deceiving, for the sake of evil pleasure; that Herodias was and stands for love for living the evil according to such deceitful falsity; and that her daughter Salome, the Peaceful, stands for entirely shameless, unrestrained, enjoyment in evil.

Herod was a fox, with no real regard for the Divine law except for the sake of appearances. As a Roman governor he must pretend to esteem it; and on this account, as is said in another Gos-

pel, "feared John, and kept him safe," and "was perplexed" — turning as a fox does; and though he "would have put him to death, he feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet." But the day of the glorification of his self-intelligence arrived, when, intoxicated by flattery, the delight of unrestrained enjoyment of evil carried him away, and he promised to share his kingdom with it. The price of such enjoyment was the total rejection of the Divine commands as of any restraining authority. There was some regret in yielding the appearance of regard for them — for hypocrites give up their pretences reluctantly; it leaves the fox without a hole — but evil and flattery carried the day, and John was beheaded.

His disciples burying the body, and going and telling Jesus, meant that the truth of the Divine law of life, thus rejected by the world, the Lord would raise up. For it is a necessity, in order that the human race may exist upon the earth, that somewhere the Divine Commandments should be known and kept as the laws of God.

JESUS REVIVES JOHN'S WORK.

THEREFORE immediately Jesus departed into a desert place apart. It was into the wild land of Bashan that He went, in the borders of which — at Beth-abara, or Bethania (Roman, Batanea) — John had baptized, and Jesus had been baptized by him. And here in His Divine way He reoccupied the field from which John had perished.

John had come neither eating bread nor drinking wine. The Son of Man came eating and drinking. John purified this natural plane of rest and refreshment, from its self-indulgent excesses. The Lord also had in this same country subdued the swinish spirits. And now the Lord taught of the kingdom of heaven and the order of heaven, and fed the multitude with bread from heaven. He filled the natural plane of life with its orderly

enjoyments, that it might give proper and full support to the spiritual life.

From the account in John's Gospel we learn that Jesus perceived that the people, excited by the miracle, would come and take him by force to make Him a King. The Lord "constrained His disciples to get into a ship, and to go before Him unto the other side while He sent the multitudes away." The wind was contrary, and the ship was tossed with waves, the disciples laboring vainly to bring it to land. The tumult of their own natural hopes was imaged thus; and the Lord's labor to quiet the tumult, by His praying alone on the mountain. With His own heart quiet, He came to them in the end of the night, walking upon the sea. The disciples' faith and the limits of it were shown by Peter's attempt to go to Him on the sea. He believed in Him as the Messiah Who was to come into the world; but this was not enough to save him from the sea of worldliness. The power that lifted him out of this was "of a truth . . . the Son of God."

They came to the land, and more wonderful powers of healing than ever went forth from Him.

But it was a Passover time, which is a time of judgment as well as of deliverance. And we learn from John that when the people heard that it was only the bread of heaven that He would give them, and not the riches of the world separate from heaven, "many of His disciples went back and walked no more with Him" (JOHN vi.). It was the beginning of the end in Galilee.

It is characteristic of Matthew's account to present here the irreconcilable conflict between the traditions of the elders and the commandments of God. The "scribes and Pharisees which were of Jerusalem" were the representatives of the traditions as received from Jerusalem in Galilee. They blamed His disciples for their neglect of the formal washing of the hands, by which they themselves preserved their supreme holiness; but they made the com-

CHAPTER XV.

mand to honor father and mother of none effect by their tradition — both as regarded natural parents and the love of God and the truth of the church which are the spiritual Father and Mother. They made no account of the evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies, which proceeded out of the heart; but condemned for eating with unwashen hands. They were a plant which the Heavenly Father had not planted, and which should be rooted up.

MISSION TO THE GENTILES.

HE left Capernaum, and departed into the neighboring coasts of Tyre and Sidon; finding in this Gentile country the acknowledgment that the God of Israel was the living God, from Whom the Gentiles had the crumbs of heavenly knowledge on which they subsisted; finding also that the evils of the church were destroying the Gentile affection for the truth of the church, which was restored by His presence and His Divine fulfilment of the Word.

Once more He returns to the other side of the sea of Galilee, recovering the lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, quickening all the natural powers of mind and body to know and serve and glorify the God of Israel.

Once more He fed a multitude upon the mountain slope in Bashan. But it appears to

have been a multitude gathered from the Gentile cities of Decapolis, not as before following from Gennesaret. With five loaves and two fishes He before had filled five thousand men, leaving twelve baskets full of fragments — representing the abundance of truth of happy life that He could open to those that had the Word. But they were so full of worldly expectations and desires, that they rejected Him Who brought them only the bread that came down from heaven. But now of the Gentile multitude He fed four thousand with seven loaves and a few little fishes, and they took up of the fragments that were left, seven baskets full. It was a different reception of the truth of heaven now, both with the disciples who had passed through the former temptation and been warned by it, and by the more simple Gentile people who partook with them. The seven loaves are such truth of heaven as brings the Sabbath state of conjunction with the Lord after temptation. The four thousand are those who can receive the

good of heaven from the Lord as well as the truth about it. The seven baskets left are the holy memories of such communion with the Lord.

CHAPTER XVI.

Not to Capernaum, but to "the coasts of Magdala" Jesus now turned, meeting there the Pharisees with the Sadducees — representatives of the pride of holiness and the worldliness of the Jews. They knew the signs of the sky, and could discern the red sky of the evening from the red and lowering morning; but the state of the church they could not discern. The reddening of the sun by the evening exhalations of earth might mean only the normal state of external enjoyments following the labors of the day. But the morning sky red and lowering, ready to precipitate when the sun lifted the heavy air, meant the filling the interiors of the mind with the world and self instead of the Lord and heaven. This they took for a day of beauty, when really the storm of judgment was close at hand. Jonas was a sign

to them that the truth was now to be preached to the Gentiles for their salvation, while the Jews would be left desolate and angry.

With a word of warning to His disciples, this part of the story closes. They were to shun all thought of eminence, either spiritual or natural, as His disciples. The good that He gave, both spiritual and natural, was abundant for all. It was intended for uses to all, and not for the exclusive eminence of any one.

THE FULNESS OF THE DIVINE IN THE NATURAL LIFE.

IT is probable that at this point, when the work in Galilee was drawing to a close, occurred the visit to Jerusalem at the Feast of Tabernacles. In this feast was celebrated the full ripening of the fruits of the year, especially of the oil and the wine. It represented the ripening of the regenerate life, especially as to its wisdom of charity and of the mercy of the Lord. In the Lord the observance of it was a representative of the ripening of the Divine Human life, and the preparation to reject that which had been only the means of receiving and maturing the Divine. It marks the beginning of the last winter of His life, which ended with the cross, the resurrection, the ascension.

CHAPTER XVII.

With all this fully in view, He returned to

Cæsarea Philippi, under the slopes of the noble Hermon, whose snows are the source of the Jordan, and in some sort typify the formulas of the Ancient Church, whence flow the cleansing waters of the letter of our Scriptures.

There Peter renewed and deepened the confession called forth by the stilling of the sea, saying, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." And the Lord, accepting this as the truth, and the foundation of His church, nevertheless added the needed forewarning of suffering and death before the Divine presence with men could be perfect. He added also that a similar loss of the natural life all must endure who would be His disciples.

Then up into the high mountain He led His three disciples, that they might see there the ripening Divine Human which was His inner self, and needed now not much but the rejection of the finite body to be the presence of God with men.

The mountain, no doubt, was Hermon, the

southern terminus of the Anti-Lebanon range. The meaning of this range seems to be closely related to that of the Lebanon, whose forests of cedar it probably once shared. In relation to Palestine when occupied by the Jewish Church, it seems to stand for the wisdom of the Ancient Church in its relation to the letter of the Jewish Scriptures — on a much higher level than the Jewish Church, but now to it a memory of representatives and formal precepts, whence most of its laws and ceremonies were derived. Whether that be so or not, the high mountain on earth represents a high mountain in heaven ; which at that time could be no other than the mountain of the Ancient Heavens. To open the eyes of the disciples to see Him there was to cause them to see Him as the angels of these heavens saw Him, His face shining as the sun, and His raiment white as the light. The appearance of Moses and Elias with Him shows that it was as the Word fulfilled that He so appeared, that it was the fulfilling of

the Word that had made Him what He was; and it was that fulfilment of the Word which as to its interiors did shine as the sun, and as to its exteriors was white as the light.

The faith of the early church, represented by Peter, was delighted with such glimpses as they had of the Lord's fulfilment of the Scriptures, and would have made them permanent if they could. But they were not prepared for the opening of the spiritual sense; nor for the acknowledgment of the Lord as the Sun of heaven, the God of heaven and earth. They descended into the letter, whence once more, as at the baptism, came the voice, "This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased." Even this is more than the church has been able to receive or bear; and in Infinite gentleness the Lord has touched them, and they have known Him as Jesus only.

It was an astonishment to the disciples, and brought up the doubt that Elias must first come. The answer is that the letter of the Word must

indeed first be established; and those who reject that will reject the Lord, but those who receive that will receive the Lord; for He is the Word.

Under the mountain they met the multitude, and the father whose son was lunatic and sore vexed, possessed of a devil whom the disciples could not cast out. The father is the good of the former representative church, watching anxiously over the truth of the new Christian Church. That truth almost from the beginning has been lunatic and sore vexed, falling oft into the fires of self-love and oft into the waters of faith alone. And the church has not been able to set it right because of her lack of faith in her Lord as the God of heaven and earth. With even the rudiments of such faith, the mountain of self might be removed, and the sense of living from the Lord alone might come; and no good would be impossible. Howbeit this was not to come for long ages, until the church should be humbled by prayer and fasting. In a larger sense the love of being one's own had come

upon the race as a child, and was not to be cast out by faith like that of the apostles, nor by any less faith than that the Lord is our Heavenly Father, God Himself with us. And this must have its roots in the desire to be wholly His, and not one's own.

Again the Lord speaks of His own death, which was necessary in order that nothing might limit the presence and work of the Divine Love in Him.

He acknowledges indeed that the truth by which His Human was re-formed to be the habitation of God with men, was learned from the Word and the church by His natural love of learning. The fish He permitted to pay tribute for Him. But He was now the Son of God, the love itself of God with men, and needed not to be redeemed by the truth.

LAST APPEALS IN GALILEE.

THERE follows now the series of discourses which go so deep into the hearts of men, and reveal so deeply the saving love of the Father in the Lord. The disciples were thinking of greatness in the kingdom of heaven — a thought which has never yet left the Christian Church. But the Lord told them that to be a little child, to claim nothing for self and desire nothing for self, was the greatness of heaven; and to lose this innocence was to sink into the depths of the sea.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Experience of evil would come with the development of the natural life, but it was to be rejected as soon as recognized. Whatever appealed to one's self-love, by allurement or flattery or self indulgence, was to be rejected, that the life might be simple, from God, and obe-

dient. Whatever suggested a thought of evil with desire, was to be rejected, that the idea of God and heaven might ever be before the mind. Innocence as of little children would always behold the face of the Father in Heaven. It was such innocence as this that the Lord had come to recover. It existed in the ninety and nine in heaven; but here upon earth it had almost perished. In its tenderness and gratefulness when rescued He would greatly rejoice.

He had come as a brother to brethren — to save and not to condemn — to show them their fault and their danger, that they might hear and be saved. He was ready to illustrate in every way, by what was good and what was true and what was practically useful or necessary. He was ready to appeal to all that was known of good life or of the teachings of God. If all was rejected, men still were not condemned; they themselves refused the good of heaven. What they accepted or refused on earth, they would accept or refuse for ever.

Thus was He working for men, and so must His disciples work. And wherever they worked from both love and truth, His spirit would be in them, and the Divine blessing would be in their work.

The spirit of forgiveness is the supreme test of the quality of the church. The faith of the church, represented by Peter, was ready to forgive as a duty as often as it was required. But true charity would forgive endlessly. So does the Lord forgive. For all that one has and is he is indebted to the Lord, and he can pay the debt only by devoting all that he has and is to the Lord's service. The Lord forgives him the debt — gives him his freedom, that he may pay as he will. If he from his heart forgives others, his powers are in the Lord's service, and he is paying the debt as he can. But if he does not forgive, even the Infinite Mercifulness cannot save him from the torment of a cankered heart and acrid thought, which no kindness can relieve.

THE LAW OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE.

THUS Jesus finished His work in Galilee. He had given them the Christian law, which was the law of the Heavenly Father's love. He had brought the love of the Father down into the plane of obedience to the truth. He had subdued the disorderly natural appetites; had given the love of orderly living, with knowledge of genuine good, and affection for truth for the sake of good. He had gathered together and instructed those who received these things. He had exposed the errors and harmfulness of the teachings of the church, and set men free from bondage to them. He had taught and illustrated the exceeding goodness of the heavenly life and of its enjoyments. He had done all that Infinite gentleness and Infinite wisdom could do to save men. The

CHAPTER XIX.

Gentiles had received Him. The church in Galilee, following the scribes and Pharisees which were of Jerusalem, had rejected Him; but great multitudes were gathered out from it who followed Him, and were healed by Him.

He left Galilee, taking with Him a multitude of those who believed on Him — taking also His own gains of the Divine saving love, with its power of beneficent work in human life — and came into the country beyond the Jordan, through which lay His road to Jerusalem. This road was parallel to the one through Samaria, and was the connecting link between Galilee and Judea.*

* In one of the journeys to Jerusalem, He "sent messengers before His face; and they went, and entered into a city of the Samaritans, to make ready for Him. And they did not receive Him, because His face was as though He would go to Jerusalem." Of this Swedenborg says: "The city of the Samaritans signifies the false doctrine of those who reject the Lord; because the Samaritans did not receive Him" (Apocalypse Explained, n. 223; see also 391, 653). When false doctrines prevail, His teaching is not received; but it may be, in the parallel Gentile state of good works with desire for spiritual instruction. The road on the other side of the Jordan was mostly through the territory of Gad (a Troop), which signifies an abundance of good works.

Much more is told by John and Luke of the work in Samaria and of the journeys between Galilee and Judea, which represent the preparation of the spiritual mind to see clearly the relation between the Divine in the inmost and the outward life, and to be the uniting medium between the celestial and the natural. In Matthew and Mark, only so much is told as is necessary to establish the connection.

And first comes the teaching about the singleness and permanence of marriage — in answer to the question of those who united the truth revealed from God with the lusts of self-love. To them He said substantially, that every truth from God was one with good in God, and must be united with its own good in men — men leaving the evils of their natural inheritance and desire, and cleaving to the good from God. The hardness of men's hearts separated truth from good; and this must be permitted, that men may be regenerated in freedom; but it was not so from the beginning, nor is it of the Divine purpose.

In three degrees men may be pure in heart, and may come into the marriage of truth from God with love from God: — they may receive truth immediately into the life and thus grow up in the heavenly marriage; or they may receive it intelligently into the understanding, and come into the life of charity by living it faithfully; or they may come into some degree of purity and of spiritual marriage by a simple obedience as of themselves, "for the kingdom of heaven's sake." In one of these degrees the good love from God must be united with the truth, or man has nothing of the kingdom of heaven in him.

Then follows the bringing of the little children, "that He should put His hands on them, and pray." For the Divine is communicated to those who are innocent, neither claiming nor seeking aught for themselves, but depending wholly on their Heavenly Father, as His little children.

And now follows a most important lesson for all to learn, who have been diligent in acquiring the truth and learning to live it — that there

must be no pride in knowing the truth, nor in faithful abundant good life from it, that there may be a sense of conjunction with God in it. The thought of these as one's own, or of the possibility of having any good as one's own, is incompatible with the sense of living from God which constitutes the kingdom of heaven.

The disciples as yet knew of no other way than to do good of themselves. The Lord alone, from the Divine in Him, knew the Divine way, the way of conjunction between God and man.

Peter's question showed the willingness of those who are living the truth, to give up the self-life for the Lord, and yet also the expectation of reward. The Lord's answer taught that the truths they lived should, when reborn of God, share in the Divine glory. And that just so far as they gave up the possessions of self and the care for self they should receive what was innocent and deep, and full of life from God.*

* Apocalypse Explained, 724.

CHAPTER XX.

And then in the beautiful parable of the laborers in the vineyard, He taught that not according to the labors in acquiring truths and living them — necessary though these may be — are the rewards of heaven; but according to the innocence, whether preserved unharmed from childhood, or regained through toil. And those who think they have earned much, will receive heaven more tardily than they who know they have earned nothing, but receive of the Divine Mercy that to which they, being only evil, have no claim.

The Lord's own thorough surrender of that which could claim aught for self was expressed in what He now again foretold as His purpose in going up to Jerusalem. The very slight impression made upon the disciples, the very slight impression it has ever made upon the Christian Church, is shown by the petition now offered by the mother of Zebedee's children * that her two

* It will be remembered that it was Zebedee who remained in the ship with the hired servants, when James and John followed

sons might sit, one on the right hand and one on the left, in His kingdom. The Lord answered that they would be purified in following Him, even as He was purified, and according as they were prepared they would receive from the Father. And then He emphasized the last and supreme lesson of the journey, that a gentle humility which had no regard to self, but would minister and serve without any restraint or limit, was the only greatness He possessed, the only greatness He had to bestow.

These, then, are the lessons of the last journey to Jerusalem. They will be seen to belong to the inner mind, where is the spiritual or truly rational thought, which brings the outer life of good conduct into relation with the inner presence of the Lord. They teach the unity of the truth from God with the love of God; the necessity for innocence, the ascribing of nothing

the Lord; and now the mother of his children seeks their greatness. So does the zeal of natural affection for even the noblest truths of the church, mingle the hope of greatness with the love of them.

to self, that the love of God which is heaven may enter. They teach that pride in the truth and in faithful labor is a hindrance to happy life from the Spirit of God; and that the acknowledgment that good is of the Divine mercy alone is the essential condition of receiving good; also that the essence of the Divine goodness is a gentleness that loves to serve only, and would perish if the thought of greatness should intrude. These surely are just the lessons needed to open the plane of good conduct to the sense of life from God. And it will not have escaped notice that they are in substance those of the sixth chapter of Matthew — not to have any reflection upon self, or sense of merit, in good works; to keep the heart open to the Lord with innocent acknowledgment that all good is from Him; to bear willingly and cheerfully the chastening necessary to remove the self; to care only for the Lord and heaven, rejecting self and the world; to be trustful and innocent as the birds and the lilies, caring only to do the work of each day from

the Spirit of the Lord, and trusting all else to Him.*

The opening the eyes of the blind, is now the revelation of the beautiful life of service from the Spirit of God, made possible by the presence of that Spirit in the Divine Human of the Lord. It is the opening of heaven to those who before saw nothing but the earth.

* Luke places a large part of this teaching, together with much more, in this same region beyond the Jordan — not in the story of this last journey, but in another of the same winter.

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EXPLORATION OF THE TEMPLE OF GOD.

CHAPTER XXI.

WE have dwelt long upon the Lord's work on the plane of conduct, and have followed His exploration of the plane of motives, by which the conduct is connected with the Divine. Now we come to the direct relation of the soul with the Divine Presence. That Presence existed representatively in the temple at Jerusalem. It had been felt in an innocent unrational way by the earliest church upon earth. It had been known rationally, its quality perceived in contrast with the inner self, by no one. A new development of the rational faculty, capable of apprehending these deeper things in the soul, was necessary before this could be grasped, and the inmost conscious mind set in order for the dwelling-place of the Divine.

This rational development then existed in the Lord alone, and is only now slowly taking place in the human race. And this is meant by the colt, the foal of an ass, on which never man sat, on which Jesus now came to explore the temple and the church at Jerusalem. The ass also was with the colt; for the new understanding is supported by the old, and is not different from it except in being a new development of it. As a King the Lord came, the King of the daughter of Zion, because He was now the supreme truth which was to set humanity from its inmosts in true relation to God. They put their clothes upon the colt, or spread them in the way, and cut down branches from the trees and strewed them in the way, representing the submission of all forms of life and all perceptions of truth to this supreme truth of the relation of man to God. They cried, "Hosanna to the Son of David; Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the Highest," because in Him and through Him God was now the Saviour of men.

In the temple He found those that sold and bought, the money-changers and them that sold doves — true examples and representatives of the human self in its disposition to make gain of holy truths and holy goods, to appropriate to self and make gain from even the light and the love of the Spirit of God.

He healed there the blind and the lame — those who knew not and yet would know the reality of the Divine Presence revealed only in Him; and those who felt their inability to live from it, as no man could but from Him. And there the children cried Hosanna, in innocent recognition. But the chief priests and scribes, representing the selfish pride in holy good and in holy truth from God, were sore displeased.

In Bethany, where Lazarus was, representing a new charity from the Spirit of God, He lodged; and from there returned to the city. He hungered for something good from those with whom the Presence of God vainly rested. But they were a tree with knowledge from the Word, but

no good of life. And now their end was come, and the kingdom was to depart from them.

He tested them by their recognition of the Divine authority of the truth of life which John taught; but to them it had no such authority. And to whom that basis of acknowledgment is lacking, there can be no recognition of the Divine in deeper truth.

Those who had sinned through love of the world and of pleasure, suffered themselves to be corrected and saved. But to those who professed to love holy things, but instead of correcting their lives by them used them to justify and exalt self, no salvation was possible.

The vineyard of God had been placed in their care, but every demand for the fruits of it they had resented; and now they would destroy Him Whom the Father's Love had sent to save them — Who was that saving Love itself teaching and reasoning with them.

And yet He Whom they rejected would be the corner stone of a new chureh which now would

rise as they should pass away. Some might unheedingly stumble upon it, as did the publicans and harlots, and would suffer for their heedlessness; but they upon whom it should fall, in total condemnation of their misuse of the truth, would be ground to powder.

They saw now that they must destroy Him, or they would be destroyed.

But Jesus continued, in further exploration of their relation to the Divine: — In Him a marriage with the Divine was offered to all, and the good things of heaven by means of it; but they despised it. The simple and uninstructed would be gathered in, and those who received instruction would be clothed in the garments of heaven, but those who trusted in their own goodness would be cast out.

CHAPTER XXII.

Thus ended the Divine exploration of the church which should be the means of conjunction between God and men. They made the Lord's house of prayer a den of thieves. They had the Word, but bore not its fruit. They kept not its

teachings of life either literal or spiritual. They were unfaithful husbandmen, rendering nothing of the fruitfulness for which the vineyard had been entrusted to them. They were rejecting Him Who was the very Presence of God with men, and upon Whom the church must be built. They were refusing the heavenly marriage, and the good of heaven, which God in Him had provided for them.

But falsity confirmed by perversions of the Scriptures, does not yield without an attempt to destroy the truth. The love of self, in the form of Pharisaical pride in holiness, combines with the love of the world, and presently with the love of the body only, to ensnare Him with their false reasonings. The first two bring the question about tribute to Cæsar. Neither cares anything for God except in name. They are in antagonism with each other, the one caring only for a free and easy life in the world as the highest good, and the other for a self-holiness apart from the contamination of the world. But they unite to

ensnare Him Who is the Presence of God with men. If He permits tribute to Cæsar, the pride of holiness in the name of God will flame, and condemn Him as not of God. If He forbids it, He is not of the world, and should be condemned and rejected by the world.

He answers them with an even justice which silences them both. From their own lips He gathers the confession that the forms of life are of necessity from the world, though the substance of good is from God. And so was He. The stamp He had, the forms of truth He learned, as the Son of Man. The life and substance were of God. And so should be the church with them —in the world and adapted to the world, yet of God.

The lovers of the body only, who deny that there is any life apart from the body, next attack Him. They tell Him of seven brethren, who may stand for themselves, mere forms of bodily lusts; of a woman, who is the truth of the church with them, a church of the body only, with no

spiritual internal. Serving the body only the truth of the church is united with its lusts, and in the end is totally destroyed, so that neither to it nor to them is there any resurrection to life. This was their condition. Out of their own mouth they were judged. Had they known the Scriptures which are the truth of life from God, and the power of God which is the love of the good life according to the truth, they would have entered into the heavenly marriage on earth, and in the resurrection would have been angels of God in heaven. For all who are in the marriage of good and truth of any degree — of the child's innocence represented by Abraham, of the intelligence represented by Isaac, or the obedience represented by Jacob — live in heaven with heavenly life from God, though they who are spiritually dead acknowledge Him not.

The account in Mark indicates that it was of good intent that the "lawyer" now asked Him, Which is the great commandment of the Law? — to learn what He held as the essential

truth. And He answered: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets" — the absolutely unselfish commandments of the Divine life.

And then He asked them in turn: "What think ye of Christ? Whose Son is He?" And their answer showed that there was nought in the Christ but what was of them, that they would recognize; while His reply was, that the Divine in Him would put all that they valued under foot.

Their effort to entangle Him was ended. It had brought from Him the truth of God by which they should be judged — that the church should be in the world, and adapted to the world, yet of God: that the truth of the church with them was made to serve their own lusts, and was destroyed thereby; whereas the truth of God should be united with the love of God in a mar-

riage unto eternal life: that the law of love to God and the neighbor was the Divine law of heaven and earth: that the Divine of God should rule in all things, and whatever is of man should serve in the lowest place.

So clear and simple is this truth of God, that the subtleties of evil can make no answer, but must submit to be judged by it.

THE CONDEMNATION.

AND now their judgment follows, which would free the simple-hearted from their yoke :—

They had the law, and taught truth from it for the common people, even if they perverted it for themselves. Their requirements were heavy for people who must live in the world, but they separated themselves from the world, and bore none of the burdens.* They taught truth showily, that they might be seen of men, and have honor as teachers of men. The Lord's followers should not try to be leaders, but brethren, loving the Lord, children of one Father. They should not care to be great, but to serve and do good. But they who were in pride of truth and of holiness, neither sought the life of heaven, nor permitted others to seek it, but

* Arcana Cœlestia, 9825; Apocalypse Explained, 395.

turned the faces of all to themselves.* Those who were in good and desired truth they misled. They had the Word and should have led to God and heaven, but instead they led to hell, even by teachings which they themselves did not believe. The gold and the gift which were of men they held to be more holy, and swearing by them more binding, than the altar and the temple — when yet the altar with its fires stood for the Lord uniting men to Himself, which alone gives holiness to the gifts of affection; and the temple for His teaching of truth, which makes holy the good of their lives.

Their own wills were their standard, not the Lord. Outward symbols were to them of sole importance, while the essentials — judgment, mercy, and faith — they cared not for. They strained out and condemned small errors of appearances only, but fundamental false principles of morality, like making purity in mere ceremonials the essential of life, they accepted. The outward forms or

* See Arcana Cœlestia, 4844; Apocalypse Explained, 1121.

receptacles of truth and goodness were all they attended to, not heeding the falsity and evil with which they were filled.* Woe was denounced upon them because they were of hell and tended thither. They professed the extremest righteousness of life toward God and men, but within were full of hypocrisy and iniquity. They knew the wickedness of their fathers in rejecting the warnings of God, yet they themselves were rejecting and destroying much more. The Lord Himself, with His teachings of truth and of good, was the fulfilment of all that the prophets had represented. Abel the keeper of sheep stands for those who keep charity and mutual love; and Zacharias† who warned the people who were serving idols and representatives of evil, "Why transgress ye the commandment of Jehovah?" stands for such warning of evil. Both the love and the warning they had in Him, and were absolutely rejecting them.

* Apocalypse Explained, 659.

† 2 CHRON. xxiv. 20–22; Apocalypse Explained, 329, 624, 655.

The Love of God in Him was yearning over them, and would instruct and protect them; but they rejected both its kindness and its truth. The church with them was a waste. A new church must now be raised up which should acknowledge the Divine in His Human, and receive the good and truth of heaven through that acknowledgment.

Thus ended the teaching in the temple, the public teaching of Jesus in Jerusalem. He had shown that they who had the Word, and upon whom rested the duties of the Church of God, and whose temple and altar represented the Presence of God with men, had nothing of that Presence in their hearts, had nothing of the Word in their lives, did nothing of the duty of the church; but were destroying every truth and good from God. Also that now the time was come for their mere shell of a church to be ended, and a new church to be established which should rest upon Him, and receive of the truth and love of God from Him.

PREDICTIONS OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

THE Lord had explored the church at Jerusalem, where was the presence of God and heaven in holy representatives, and had shown that the love and the truth of that Divine and heavenly Presence were totally destroyed in the church — that the holy representatives were a husk only, with no good fruit, but decay and corruption within. The Jews were doing nothing of the use of a church in making known and interpreting to mankind the Presence of God. And now their house should be deserted, and the Divine Presence, with the duty and the privileges of the church of God, should be given to those who would recognize and receive the Divine in the Divine Human. With this prediction the Lord left their temple forever.

CHAPTER XXIV.

But it was needful that He should give warn-

ing of the affliction that should come upon the Christian Church also. And He made use of the imagery of the impending destruction of Jerusalem to describe the even greater misery which for a little time should come upon His own church. He spoke of the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom unto all nations; of the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place; of the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory — words which had scarce any application to the times immediately at hand, but were to have a thorough and deep fulfilment when men had learned how self would appropriate and destroy the Christian good and truth also, and should be able to receive the Lord once more in a profounder, juster humility. The stones of the temple of which He was thinking were the Christian truths of which He was even now building His church, and which should presently be thrown down.*

* Summary Exposition of the Doctrine of the New Church, 71; Apocalypse Revealed, 191.

He "sat upon the Mount of Olives," in a state of interior union with the Divine, from which He saw all the states of the church. To the disciples * who were in most interior states of faith and love and good life, He foretold that the church would come into temptations from the love of rule by means of Christian truth, so that it would "not know what was good and what true." † Falsified truths would be taught instead of genuine; ‡ quarrels and strife would arise,§ and conflict of evil with evil, and falsity with falsity, until everything good and true in the church of the Lord was destroyed.

There is no part of the Gospel story more fully and minutely explained by Swedenborg than these chapters. We need not, therefore, dwell upon them here, further than to note that "the abomination of desolation" is the heavy cloud of evil spirits within the borders of the Chris-

* Peter and James and John and Andrew asked Him privately. (MARK xiii. 3.)

† Arcana Cœlestia, 3481.

‡ Apocalypse Explained, 735. § *Ibid.*, 734.

tian heaven, cutting off the influence of heaven from men upon the earth;* that Daniel the prophet is the truth of the Word as to judgment; and that unless the Lord had come again to judgment, mankind must have perished from the earth.

In the clouds of heaven He would come—a figure familiarly understood as the opening of the parables and representatives of the Bible to show the Divine life pictured everywhere in it. And by the truth of that Divine life the church should be judged. They would be living heedlessly, as if the Lord were not. But He should come with the fulness of Divine light and power, and the light should search through all the world, separating everywhere the evil from the good.

Not mere knowledge or profession should then avail; men should be known as the Lord's disciples solely by their love for one another.

CHAPTER XXV.

* The Last Judgment, *posthumous*.

It was of necessity that He should appear to go into a far country; for the race was just entering upon its young manhood, and must choose its course in freedom. He would entrust to them the abundant experience of Christian love which His Spirit would store up in them, represented by five talents; the charity that should come later, in the early days of doctrinal discussion; and the truth of life that they still might live if they would when these failed. Wherever love and charity and use were chosen as the things to be sought and cherished, the happy things of heaven would be multiplied in the church, and men would be fitted for a joyful expansion of life from the Spirit of the Lord. But knowledge alone, unless men by using it gathered intelligence and love of use, was a barren thing, which they who did not live it would themselves care nothing for.*

And last of these direct predictions of the Christian Church is the parable of the separation

*Arcana Cœlestia, 5291; Apocalypse Explained, 193.

of the sheep from the goats. The sheep are they who would cultivate charity and love; of them the Lord would form His Christian heaven. The goats are they who would care only for knowledge; they could serve only as warnings.

These two chapters thus briefly indicate the whole history of the first Christian Church. It is also the history of the first Christian experience in those who later come to see how the love of self appropriates that experience to its own pride and assurance, and how the pride of intelligence cares for nothing but the knowledge of Christian truth, with no regard to use. It is inevitable that there should be such manifestations, at least of the tendencies of the self, before the developing man sees reason for the deeper exploration and judgment, which are necessary to the removal of the self from the inmost consciousness, and the surrender there to the love of the Lord.

These things were fulfilled in the Lord's own Human at the time He was speaking, though they were not to be fulfilled in the church for

ages to come. There was no tendency to evil and misappropriation in His inherited human which He did not thoroughly explore and reject. There was no depth of the humiliation of the self which He did not attain. There was no conceivable opening of the human heart to the Divine love which was not effected in Him, even to the absolute union of the Divine and the Human. From His own experience of the human tendencies and possibilities in Himself, He foresaw and foretold what was coming to the church.

JUDGMENT AND DELIVERANCE.

BESIDES these deeper tendencies which He was exploring for judgment, there yet remained to be completed the judgment upon the Jewish Church, and upon that which He had in common with them. The judgment and rejection of this in Himself was also the judgment and rejection of the deeper tendencies which He had already explored in Himself, and which would appear with the development of a maturer rationality in the church. The historical events recorded in the coming chapters relate to both, and describe the judgment upon the Jewish Church, while they represent the judgment upon the Christian Church.

The Passover was at hand — the feast which from the time of its institution in Egypt had

commemorated both judgment and deliverance. The forces of appropriation to self were gathered together to destroy the Divine of the Lord, which would only serve and minister.* "In Bethany" the Lord was, on the Mount of Olives — in the lowly states of those who would know the merciful love of God. "In the house of Simon the leper," is with those in the good of faithful worship who are conscious that their worship has not brought conjunction with the living God, but to whom the merciful love of God is present and is becoming known in the Lord Jesus. The woman who anointed Him is the affection for the truth of the new life of charity from God. The ointment is the symbol of the Divine with which He was anointed from the Lord Jehovah. The alabaster box may represent the facts of her own experience of it. Her pouring it on His head signifies her recognition of the Divine in Him and in all His life. The protest of the

* "Not on the feast day" is equivalent to "in the absence of the multitude," because the simple good believed in Him.

disciples reveals the tendency of the church to make gain to self of the Divine love of her Lord. But in the eyes of the Lord such grateful acknowledgment of the Divine in Him is an essential of His church which will always be recorded and remembered.

Judas now separates himself from the others, as representing the desire for advantage to self from the holy good and the holy truth of the Divine in the Lord's Human. He allied himself with the chief priests, because this spirit in the Christian Church is the same as in the Jewish. The thirty pieces of silver represent the small account it makes of the saving work of the Lord.* His betraying the Lord to the priests, means the giving up of this redeeming work, that the love of advantage to self might still live.

The whole history of the Christian Church shows at how low a price the Lord's redemption from evil has been valued, and how this has been waived that the love of making gain of holy good

* Arcana Cœlestia, 2966.

and holy truth might live and profit by Him. The experience of every one who reflects will show how strong this tendency still is.

But the feast of unleavened bread, betokening the reception of pure good from the Lord, was also to be celebrated. And in this He instituted a visible memorial of Himself which should be as Himself when He should not be visible. For He would be present in it — with His love of service in the bread, and His thought for the good of men in the wine. They should testify, as they do testify, that the Divine Human of the Lord is ever with us, a redeeming, saving Presence to every one who will receive it.

To the Lord Himself the time was at hand for the laying off of the last remnant of self, and the infilling with the Divine. After which from the fulness of the Divine Spirit in Him all might drink, and in their drinking He would drink with them.

THE LAYING DOWN THE LIFE.

BUT the time was come. They knew not what was meant by laying down the self-life to live from God. He alone knew. He alone must overcome the accumulated love of self of the whole human race, resisting in Him the desire for the Divine life. He must meet it and overcome it, for Himself and for men, and be Himself the Divine Presence with them, or men would never know that such a change was possible. Except for Him it would neither be possible nor conceivable. But after it was accomplished in Him, He said that He would be with them again on the plane of good conduct, where the work must begin in them.

With sincerity, and all unconscious of the self that is in it, the first natural Christian faith believes that it will be equal to any test of disciple-

ship. The Lord knows what is within, and what it must pass through, for He Himself has experienced it.

To the place of the oil-press He went, where the olives were crushed that the pure oil might flow freely. For so would He yield His human thought and effort and desire, that the love of God for men might flow forth from Him without limitation or impediment.

All the disciples went with Him to the garden; three went with Him a little further, even into the state of sorrow and heaviness; but He went alone a little further still, and in lowliest prostration, the flesh shrinking and sweating great drops of blood under the conflict, He prayed three times that if the cup might not pass except He drank it, the Father's will might still be done. All this was densely obscure to the disciples. It was deep beyond their knowledge. They could give no help. But the conflict paused, and He told them they could rest. He was quiet, no longer struggling, but with a Divine majesty of self-submission ready to lay down the life of self.

Judas is here the love of gain to self from the holy good and truth of the Divine in the Lord. The chief priests are the same in the Jewish Church; the elders are the doctrines of evil life agreeing therewith; the great multitude are the subordinate evil loves and teachings; the swords and staves are their principles of falsity and evil. The kiss is the token of recognition and affection, here for advantage to self. The defence with the sword is by the faith which has so much of self in it that it presently would deny the Lord. And because it expresses the spirit of condemnation and not the love of saving, itself is condemned. The Lord would not pray that the angels might protect Him, or the Divine Omnipotence. He would fulfil the Scriptures, and Himself lay down the life of self, that in Him the Divine love of saving might dwell with men in fulness.

He seemed to them a thief because He was taking from them the kingdom they loved. Truly they themselves were thieves and robbers,

in taking the holy things of God to themselves. They had made the Father's house a den of thieves; but He sat daily there, teaching of the Heavenly Father, and they could not condemn Him, because the common people loved it. To them it was the Bread of Life.

But now the love of self was to have its way, and He was to meet it by laying down absolutely His own love of self. He was going too deep for the disciples to follow. He alone knew the meaning of the Scriptures of the prophets. He must fulfil it alone. Afterward from afar off men would slowly follow Him.

False witnesses accused Him of saying, "I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days." It was false because it was they who had destroyed the truth of God, and would destroy the temple of His body. His part was to restore the Divine Truth, and to build the Divine Human which should be the Tabernacle of God with men for ever.

Even so no evil could be shown in the charge;

but it suggested the real issue between them — that their pride of holiness must give place to the Father's Presence in Him. This issue the high priest now was determined to force; and he said: "I adjure Thee by the living God, that Thou tell us whether Thou be the Christ, the Son of God." "Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said; nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." This was blasphemy to them, for it was the destruction of their claim to be the church of God.

In following so closely the application to the Jewish Church, we nevertheless may have in mind the deeper application to the tendency of human nature to appropriate to self the holy good and the holy truth of the Divine Presence in the Lord. This tendency He Himself was meeting at that very time, and overcoming by the total surrender of the self-life, for no possible gain to self, present or future, but for the Divine end of saving men.

The patient submission to buffeting and spitting, is significant of the humiliation of the self, and the prevalence of the Divine love of saving.

The faith of the Christian Church was not equal to this strain. The apostles through all their lives never lost the hope and expectation of sitting upon thrones in heaven, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. The church has never met and overcome the tendency to use holy good and holy truth for advantage to self; but on the contrary has been overcome and destroyed by it.

That this would be so, was represented by Peter's denial of the Lord. The discernment of this root of evil, the repentance of the church, and the hope of a deeper, more humble acknowledgment of the Lord, are represented by the bitter weeping.

The church has rejected the Lord as the Presence of the Heavenly Father, and has incited the world to reject Him. By perverting its faith and its charity, it has destroyed His true character, and made Him in the eyes of the world a fraud and a pretender.

Judas had acted out his self-love, as Peter also had shown his. And he too repents, bringing back, as now worthless, what the self had desired, and despairing because of the loss of the Lord. Will not the church in like manner repent of her sin of appropriating holy good and holy truth to self, and, despairing of ever being able to receive them worthily, condemn herself utterly. And then may there not be given so strong a sense that these holy things are the Lord's, and are with us of His Mercy, that they will not be so misappropriated?

The sin of Judas was the same as that of the priests; yet he repented, and they did not. Is not this a sign of hope for the Christian Church, as well as for Judas?

The thirty pieces of silver Swedenborg says stands for the "little esteem for the merit of the Lord and redemption and salvation by Him; the potter, for reformation and regeneration."* That the silver was given for the potter's field, "to

* Arcana Cœlestia, 2276.

bury strangers in," means then that the Lord's redemption and salvation, so lightly esteemed, were made over to the Gentiles for their reformation and regeneration, and thus resurrection to life.

COERCION OF THE WORLD BY THE CHURCH.

"THE governor" is the government of the world, the rule of natural law. Before this Jesus stands, confessedly the fulfilment and exemplification of the Scriptures — "the King of the Jews." To the many accusations by self-love and perverse doctrines He answers nothing, for they do not touch the Reality which He is.

It is the Passover, a feast of condemnation and a feast of release. Jesus stands for the subjection of the self to the Divine love of doing good; and Barabbas, for the murderous turbulence and violence of the self, throwing off restraint. We remember Christian centuries in which the church with its Inquisition stood for cruelty and violence, and compelled the rulers of the world to do its bidding. We recognize

the same tendency, in the love of gain from holy things, to enmity and violence, whenever it is crossed.

All that tendency to resentment and violence the Lord was now meeting, and subduing in Himself by the power of the Divine Love. The conflict was tremendous, the victory complete. Quietly and gently He bore all that they could do to Him.

Not Pilate, but the priests, condemned Him. Not natural, moral, or civil law, but the church, has incited the cruelest things that have ever been done in Christendom. And this has been because the love of appropriating to self the holy good and the holy truth of the Lord, is the cruelest, wickedest thing there is in the heart of man. The moral good of the community, the moral sense, protests; though not understanding the evil, which is as a dreadful dream. The moral and civil rule is free from the blame. The tyranny of the church bears all before it.

The world yields, accepting the judgment of

the church of her own King. They ignore the humility and unpretentiousness with which the Lord came to save men, and ridicule His claim to royal goodness and truth and power. In His own raiment of humility, as the truth of God accommodated to men in love and mercy, they crucify Him. Another Simon, from a Gentile country, their violence compels to share in His condemnation.*

In the place of a skull — where are only the bony externals of the Word, with no life in them — they crucify Him; for such was the Word with the church. In the evil thinking of the church He had no part. The letter of the Scriptures treating of Him they rent and shaped as they pleased. The spirit was protected from them by the Providence of God. His accusation, for which He was condemned, was that He would have saved men from the evil of their self-life,

* "He bearing His cross," means bearing His own condemnation. To bear it for Him would be an act of sympathy.

Simon was "the father of Alexander and Rufus," who appear to have been well known Christians later. (ROMANS xvi. 13.)

and taught them the life of charity — Jesus, the King of Jews.

With thieves * they crucified Him, because His resisting the appropriation of holy things to self would take the kingdom from them. They taunted Him with inability to save His own life, when in fact at that very time He was laying down the life of self which He abhorred, that He might take on the Divine life, pure and sweet and loving, in which He delighted. If He would have saved the self-life they would have accepted Him. The Divine in Him they despised and rejected. At the hour which should have stood for the brightest light, there was darkness over all the church until the night drew near.

The words of the twenty-second Psalm describe the sense of the Human mind that it was left alone; which was indeed so that it might of itself

* The thieves perhaps represent those who followed Him, and shared in His condemnation — "the same as by the sheep and the goats; wherefore it was said to the one who acknowledged the Lord, that he should be with Him in Paradise." Apocalypse Explained, 600.

use its Divine power to put off the self and unite with the Father's love. The rejoicing with which the Psalm closes, we may also ascribe to the Lord when this was attained.

The sympathy of men was limited to the letter of truth, and their imperfect understanding of its life. He accepts such sympathy; but even the letter teaches the laying down of the life; and this the Lord obeys.

It was not merely the love for physical life, and for self-vindication and honor from men that He laid down, but the claim to holiness and honor for the possession of the Divine Spirit, which the self-love afterward produced in the Christian Church, for its destruction; and the further pride of understanding the deep things of the Word, which the same self-love must still produce. Absolutely all the desires of the self for advantage from holy things He gave up, turning from them and separating Himself from them in voluntary surrender to the Father's love. He gave them up for ever; and all in Him that could admit such desires, He put off.

THE LAW OF THE RELATION TO GOD.

THE work at Jerusalem was finished; and in it we see illustrated the full meaning of the third section of the Sermon on the Mount, the Christian Law. They had judged Him to death, rejecting in Him the love and the truth of God and all that makes heaven. This was their own judgment. Their whole care was given to the motes of external observance, and they gave no thought to the beam of pride of holiness which shut out from their sight everything good and true from God and heaven. The holy things of the Word and of worship were given to the selfish lusts represented by dogs and swine, and were trampled in the mire of foul life, while spiritual life was destroyed. The Lord had brought to them in their temple the Presence of the Heavenly Father, and offered them the

good gifts that the Father loved to give. These they might have for the asking; with the condition that they would observe the law of heaven: "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." They were warned to enter heaven by this gate; but they preferred the broad way of the love of self. They were false prophets, professing to be the flock of God, but really ravening wolves — children of the devil. They were an evil tree bearing evil fruits. They professed to worship the God of heaven, to teach His Word, and to make many proselytes. But it was all for their own glory. The God of heaven was not in their work.

The Lord Himself had exemplified the keeping of the Law. He had come to save, not to condemn; and had condemned evil only to save the good. His judgment was the judgment of the love of God, with self-love wholly removed. No dogs or swine in Him defiled or resented the holy truth and good of God. The gifts

of the Spirit of God to Him He offered them, knowing how exceedingly good they were. The way which led to life He walked and showed. The truth of love He taught, not for Himself, but from Love itself. He was a good tree, the very Tree of Life, bearing every good fruit. The Heavenly Father was with Him, well pleased with His saving work.

His house was the house of God, built upon the eternal Rock, and nothing that they could do could shake it; while theirs was built upon the disconnected letter of the Word, with no hold upon Him Who was the life of the Word; and now it was falling, and great was the fall of it. What He had of their nature from them fell too; but it was only the removing of the scaffolding to disclose the glorious temple within.

The veil of mere representatives was now rent in twain from the top to the bottom, that the love and the truth of God might come forth unveiled.* The change that was coming over

* Apocalypse Explained, 400.

the church was represented by the quaking of the earth; the breaking up of false dogmas, by the rending of the rocks; the new freedom to the spirits of men in both worlds, by the opening of the graves, and the appearance of the saints to many.

The candid world has seen these changes in the past, and is seeing them in their present more wonderful form; and it will say, "Truly this was the Son of God." Women are watching afar off, which are affections for truth centring in Him, and must wait until He is revealed to them — in the fullest sense, as the life of the Word. And the recognition of and love for the Divine in the Lord, for which Joseph stands, lays up the memory of His life in its own ideal and hope of heaven, which the Lord has taught it to hew out in the Word.*

The Marys are watching and waiting — Mary Magdalene, the affection for Him as the truth

* As burial stands for the resurrection, so the tomb stands for the place of resurrection, or heaven. Also for the regenerate state.

which saves from evil; and Mary the Mother, affection for the truth which reveals the goodness of God.

They wait for the Word to open; while self-love and pride in holiness would seal up the spirit of love and charity in the Word that nothing of it might appear, for their condemnation. These impress upon the Word the seal of their interpretation, to keep it closed.

THE NEW STATE OF THE CHURCH.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE representative of a Sabbath, with the Spirit of the Lord rejected, and nought but the pride of holiness and of self-intelligence in it, has ended. Even as the Marys are coming to see, and to testify to the holiness of the truth they have seen and known, the angel of the Divine Presence opens the Word, and inaugurates a new state of the church.* It is to be a state of good life, in which the Lord should be with them, and be seen of them. Jesus Himself, the saving Love of God, they see, which confirms this promise.

The love of self and the love of self-intelligence, give large rewards of flattery and wealth to their minions to deny the reality of the Presence of the Lord in the Word, and make it a

* Apocalypse Explained, 400.

fiction of the credulous; and even so does it appear to this day to the lovers of self and the world.

RETURN TO GALILEE.

BUT upon "the mountain" in Galilee — the same words which describe the place where the Christian law was given,* and representing the presence of the Love of God in the plane of good life — He who is now the fulfilment of the Law again appears to the faithful, though at first not clearly understood. He comes as the truth of the love of God, with all the power of that love in heaven and on earth.

He has taught the law of Christian life as the law of God, and has made the plane of conduct wholesome and orderly, use-loving and wise, from His presence in it, protected from evil infestations. He has taught purity and unselfishness of motive in good conduct; with no claim of merit or reflection upon self; but faithful love

* MATTHEW v. 1.

for Him Who alone is good and wise, and innocent ascription of all good to Him. He has taught the entire surrender of the heart and soul and mind to the Father's love, with no pride of holiness or of intelligence, and no desire for any good in life but the good of living from His Spirit, under His protection.

All this He has taught and lived. In the glory of the Heavenly Father's Love He comes now in the plane of good life, filling it from the inmost with the sense of the Presence of God. And to those who receive Him He gives the charge to make Him known to all who are in good, that they may be enrolled among those who receive the Father's Love in the Truth of His Human life, and live from His Spirit.

And this Gospel through Matthew closes with the exhortation to observe all things of this Christian Law which the Lord has commanded; and the promise of His presence always, as long as the church shall endure. Amen.

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